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## The Stolen Charm

A very rich man kept a puppy and a fox-cub. Besides these he possessed a tiny silver model of a ship,--a charm given to him by some god, what god I know not. One day this charm was stolen, and could nowhere be found. The rich man was so violently grieved at this, that he lay down and refused all food, and was like to die. Meanwhile the puppy and the fox-cub played about in his room. But when they saw, after some time, that the man was really going to die, the fox-cub said to the puppy: "If our master dies, we shall die of hunger too; so we had better search for the charm." So they consulted as to the best way to search for it; and at last the fox-cub was struck by the idea that the ogre who lived at the top of the large mountain that stands at the end of the world might have stolen the charm and put it into his box. The fox-cub seemed to see that this had really happened. So the two little animals determined to go and rescue the charm from the ogre. But they knew that they could not accomplish this alone, and resolved to add the rat[-god] to their number. So they invited the rat, and the three went off, dancing merrily.

Now the ogre was always looking steadily in the direction of the sick rich man, hoping that he would die. So he did not notice the approach of the fox-cub, the dog, and the rat. So when they reached the ogre's house, the rat, with the help of the fox-cub, scooped out a passage under and into the house, by which all three made their way in. They then decided that it must be left to the rat to get hold of the charm by nibbling a hole in the box in which it was kept. Meanwhile the fox-cub assumed the shape of a little boy, and the puppy that of a little girl,--two beautiful little creatures who danced and went through all sorts of antics, much to the amusement of the ogre. The ogre was, however, suspicious as to how they had come into the house, and whence they had come, for the doors were not open. So he determined just to divert himself awhile by watching their frolics, and then to kill them. Meanwhile the rat had nibbled a hole in the box. Then getting into it, he rescued the charm, and went out again through the passage in the ground. The little boy and girl disappeared too; how, the ogre could not tell. He made to pursue them through the door, when he saw them fleeing. But on second thoughts he came to the conclusion that, having once been taken in by a fox, there was no use in further endeavours. So he did not follow the three animals as they fled away.

They returned to the village; the puppy and the fox-cub to their master's house, the rat to its own place. The puppy and the fox-cub took home with them the charm, and placed it by their master's pillow, playing about near him, and pulling his clothes a little with their teeth. At length he lifted his head and saw the charm. Then he worshipped it with great joy and gratitude. Afterwards the fox-cub and the puppy caused him to see in a dream how the charm had been recovered through the rat's assistance. So he worshipped the rat also.

For this reason the Ainos do not think so very badly of the rat after all. The fox, too, though often pursued by dogs, will sometimes make friends with them; and even when a dog is pursuing a fox, it will not bite the latter if it turns its face towards the pursuer.--(Written down from memory. Told by Ishanashte, 21st November, 1886.)

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of Aino Folk-Tales, by Basil Hall Chamberlain



## THE TRIAL PATH

It was an autumn night on the plain. The smoke-lapels of the cone-shaped tepee flapped gently in the breeze. From the low night sky, with its myriad fire points, a large bright star peeped in at the smoke-hole of the wigwam between its fluttering lapels, down upon two Dakotas talking in the dark. The mellow stream from the star above, a maid of twenty summers, on a bed of sweetgrass, drank in with her wakeful eyes. On the opposite side of the tepee, beyond the centre fireplace, the grandmother spread her rug. Though once she had lain down, the telling of a story has aroused her to a sitting posture.

Her eyes are tight closed. With a thin palm she strokes her wind-shorn

hair.

"Yes, my grandchild, the legend says the large bright stars are wise old warriors, and the small dim ones are handsome young braves," she reiterates, in a high, tremulous voice.

"Then this one peeping in at the smoke-hole yonder is my dear old grandfather," muses the young woman, in long-drawn-out words.

Her soft rich voice floats through the darkness within the tepee, over the cold ashes heaped on the centre fire, and passes into the ear of the toothless old woman, who sits dumb in silent reverie. Thence it flies on swifter wing over many winter snows, till at last it cleaves the warm light atmosphere of her grandfather's youth. From there her grandmother made answer:

"Listen! I am young again. It is the day of your grandfather's death. The elder one, I mean, for there were two of them. They were like twins, though they were not brothers. They were friends, inseparable! All things, good and bad, they shared together, save one, which made them mad. In that heated frenzy the younger man slew his most intimate friend. He killed his elder brother, for long had their affection made them kin."

The voice of the old woman broke. Swaying her stooped shoulders to and fro as she sat upon her feet, she muttered vain exclamations beneath her breath. Her eyes, closed tight against the night, beheld behind them the light of bygone days. They saw again a rolling black cloud spread itself over the land. Her ear heard the deep rumbling of a tempest in the west. She bent low a cowering head, while angry thunder-birds shrieked across the sky. "Heya! heya!" (No! no!) groaned the toothless grandmother at the fury she had awakened. But the glorious peace afterward, when yellow sunshine made the people glad, now lured her memory onward through the storm.

"How fast, how loud my heart beats as I listen to the messenger's horrible tale!" she ejaculates. "From the fresh grave of the murdered man he hurried to our wigwam. Deliberately crossing his bare shins, he sat down unbidden beside my father, smoking a long-stemmed pipe. He had scarce caught his breath when, panting, he began:

"He was an only son, and a much-adored brother.'

"With wild, suspecting eyes he glanced at me as if I were in league with the man-killer, my lover. My father, exhaling sweet-scented smoke, assented--'How,' Then interrupting the 'Eya' on the lips of the round-eyed talebearer, he asked, 'My friend, will you smoke?' He took the pipe by its red-stone bowl, and pointed the long slender stem toward the man. 'Yes, yes, my friend,' replied he, and reached out a long brown arm.

"For many heart-throbs he puffed out the blue smoke, which hung like a cloud between us. But even through the smoke-mist I saw his sharp black eyes glittering toward me. I longed to ask what doom awaited the young murderer, but dared not open my lips, lest I burst forth into screams instead. My father plied the question. Returning the pipe, the man replied: 'Oh, the chieftain and his chosen men have had counsel together. They have agreed it is not safe to allow a man-killer loose in our midst. He who kills one of our tribe is an enemy, and must suffer the fate of a foe.'

"My temples throbbed like a pair of hearts!

"While I listened, a crier passed by my father's tepee. Mounted, and swaying with his pony's steps, he proclaimed in a loud voice these words (hark! I hear them now!): "Ho-po! Give ear, all you people. A terrible deed is done. Two friends--ay, brothers in heart--have quarreled together. Now one lies buried on the hill, while the other sits, a dreaded man-killer, within his dwelling." Says our chieftain: "He who kills one of our tribe commits the offense of an enemy. As such he must be tried. Let the father of the dead man choose the mode of torture or taking of life. He has suffered livid pain, and he alone can judge how great the punishment must be to avenge his wrong." It is done.

"Come, every one, to witness the judgment of a father upon him who was once his son's best friend. A wild pony is now lassoed. The man-killer must mount and ride the ranting beast. Stand you all in two parallel lines from the centre tepee of the bereaved family to the wigwam opposite in the great outer ring. Between you, in the wide space, is the given trial-way. From the outer circle the rider must mount and guide his pony toward the centre tepee. If, having gone the entire distance, the man-killer gains the centre tepee still sitting on the pony's back,

his life is spared and pardon given. But should he fall, then he himself has chosen death.'

"The crier's words now cease. A lull holds the village breathless. Then hurrying feet tear along, swish, swish, through the tall grass. Sobbing women hasten toward the trialway. The muffled groan of the round camp-ground is unbearable. With my face hid in the folds of my blanket, I run with the crowd toward the open place in the outer circle of our village. In a moment the two long files of solemn-faced people mark the path of the public trial. Ah! I see strong men trying to lead the lassoed pony, pitching and rearing, with white foam flying from his mouth. I choke with pain as I recognize my handsome lover desolately alone, striding with set face toward the lassoed pony. 'Do not fall! Choose life and me!' I cry in my breast, but over my lips I hold my thick blanket.

"In an instant he has leaped astride the frightened beast, and the men have let go their hold. Like an arrow sprung from a strong bow, the pony, with extended nostrils, plunges halfway to the centre tepee. With all his might the rider draws the strong reins in. The pony halts with wooden legs. The rider is thrown forward by force, but does not fall. Now the maddened creature pitches, with flying heels. The line of men and women sways outward. Now it is back in place, safe from the kicking, snorting thing.

"The pony is fierce, with its large black eyes bulging out of their sockets. With humped back and nose to the ground, it leaps into the air. I shut my eyes. I can not see him fall.

"A loud shout goes up from the hoarse throats of men and women. I look. So! The wild horse is conquered. My lover dismounts at the doorway of the centre wigwam. The pony, wet with sweat and shaking with exhaustion, stands like a guilty dog at his master's side. Here at the entranceway of the tepee sit the bereaved father, mother, and sister. The old warrior father rises. Stepping forward two long strides, he grasps the hand of the murderer of his only son. Holding it so the people can see, he cries, with compassionate voice, 'My son!' A murmur of surprise sweeps like a puff of sudden wind along the lines.

"The mother, with swollen eyes, with her hair cut square with her shoulders, now rises. Hurrying to the young man, she takes his right

hand. 'My son!' she greets him. But on the second word her voice shook, and she turned away in sobs.

"The young people rivet their eyes upon the young woman. She does not stir. With bowed head, she sits motionless. The old warrior speaks to her. 'Shake hands with the young brave, my little daughter. He was your brother's friend for many years. Now he must be both friend and brother to you,'

"Hereupon the girl rises. Slowly reaching out her slender hand, she cries, with twitching lips, 'My brother!' The trial ends."

"Grandmother!" exploded the girl on the bed of sweet-grass. "Is this true?"

"Tosh!" answered the grandmother, with a warmth in her voice. "It is all true. During the fifteen winters of our wedded life many ponies passed from our hands, but this little winner, Ohiyesa, was a constant member of our family. At length, on that sad day your grandfather died, Ohiyesa was killed at the grave."

Though the various groups of stars which move across the sky, marking the passing of time, told how the night was in its zenith, the old Dakota woman ventured an explanation of the burial ceremony.

"My grandchild, I have scarce ever breathed the sacred knowledge in my heart. Tonight I must tell you one of them. Surely you are old enough to understand.

"Our wise medicine-man said I did well to hasten Ohiyesa after his master. Perchance on the journey along the ghostpath your grandfather will weary, and in his heart wish for his pony. The creature, already bound on the spirit-trail, will be drawn by that subtle wish. Together master and beast will enter the next camp-ground."

The woman ceased her talking. But only the deep breathing of the girl broke the quiet, for now the night wind had lulled itself to sleep.

"Hinnu! hinnu! Asleep! I have been talking in the dark, unheard. I did wish the girl would plant in her heart this sacred tale," muttered she, in a querulous voice.



Nestling into her bed of sweet-scented grass, she dozed away into another dream. Still the guardian star in the night sky beamed compassionately down upon the little tepee on the plain.

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of **American Indian Stories**, by Zitkala-Sa



## **THE FALL OF THE SPIDER MAN**

In olden times the Spider Man lived in the sky-country. He dwelt in a bright little house all by himself, where he weaved webs and long flimsy ladders by which people went back and forth from the sky to the earth. The Star-people often went at night to earth where they roamed about as fairies of light, doing good deeds for women and little children, and they always went back and forth on the ladder of the Spider Man. The Spider Man had to work very hard, weaving his webs, and spinning the yarn from which his ladders were made. One day when he had a short breathing-time from his toil he looked down at the earth-country and there he saw many of the earth-people playing at games, or taking sweet sap from the maple trees, or gathering berries on the rolling hills; but most of the men were lazily idling and doing nothing. The women were all working, after the fashion of Indians in those days; the men were working but little. And Spider Man said to himself, "I should like to go to the earth-country where men idle their time away. I would marry four wives who would work for me while I would take life easy, for I need a rest."

He was very tired of his work for he was kept at it day and night

always spinning and weaving his webs. But when he asked for a rest he was not allowed to stop; he was only kicked for his pains and called Sleepy Head, and Lazy-bones and other harsh names, and told to work harder. Then he grew angry and he resolved to punish the Star-people because they kept him so hard at work. He thought that if he punished them and made himself a nuisance, they would be glad to be rid of him. So he hit upon a crafty plan. Each night when a Star-fairy was climbing back to the sky-country, just as he came near the top of the ladder, the Spider Man would cut the strands and the fairy would fall to earth with a great crash. Night after night he did this, and he chuckled to himself as he saw the sky-fairies sprawling through the air and kicking their heels, while the earth-people looked up wonderingly at them and called them Shooting Stars. Many Star-people fell to earth in this way because of the Spider Man's tricks, and they could never get back to the sky-country because of their broken limbs or their disfigured faces, for in the sky-country the people all must have beautiful faces and forms. But Spider Man's tricks brought him no good; the people would not drive him away because they needed his webs and he was kept always at his tasks. At last he decided to run away of his own accord, and, one night when the Moon and the Stars had gone to work and the Sun was asleep, he said farewell to the sky-country and let himself down to earth by one of his own strands of yarn, spinning it as he dropped down.

In the earth-country he married four wives as he had planned, for he wanted them to work for him while he took his ease. He thought he had worked long enough. All went well for a time and the Spider Man was quite happy living his lazy and contented life. Not a strand did he spin, nor a web did he weave. No men on earth were working; only the women toiled. At last, Glooskap, who ruled upon the earth in that time, became very angry because the men in these parts were so lazy, and he sent Famine into their country to punish them for their sins. Famine came very stealthily into the land and gathered up all the corn and carried it off; then he called to him all the animals, and the birds, and the fish of the sea and river, and he took them away with him. In all the land there was nothing left to eat. Only water remained. The people were very hungry and they lived on water for many days. Sometimes they drank the water cold, sometimes hot, sometimes luke-warm, but at best it was but poor fare. The Spider Man soon grew tired of this strange diet, for it did not satisfy his hunger to live always on water. It filled his belly and swelled him to a great size,

but it brought him little nourishment or strength. So he said, "There must be good food somewhere in the world; I will go in search of it."

That night when all the world was asleep he took a large bag, and crept softly away from his four wives and set out on his quest for food. He did not want any one to know where he was going. For several days he travelled, living only on water; but he found no food, and the bag was still empty on his back. At last one day he saw birds in the trees and he knew that he was near the border of the Hunger-Land. That night in the forest when he stopped at a stream to drink, he saw a tiny gleam of light far ahead of him through the trees. He hurried towards the light and soon he came upon a man with a great hump on his shoulders and scars on his face, and a light hanging at his back, with a shade on it which he could close and open at his will. The Spider Man said, "I am looking for food; tell me where I can find it." And the humped man with the light said, "Do you want it for your people?" But the Spider Man said, "No, I want it for myself." Then the humped man laughed and said, "You are near to the border of the Land of Plenty; follow me and I will give you food." Then he flashed the light at his back, opening and closing the shade so that the light flickered, and he set off quickly through the trees. The Spider Man followed the light flashing in the darkness, but he had to go so fast that he was almost out of breath when he reached the house where the humped man had stopped. But the humped man only laughed when he saw the Spider Man coming puffing wearily along with his fat and swollen belly. He gave him a good fat meal and the Spider Man soon felt better after his long fast. Then the humped man said, "You are the Spider Man who once weaved webs in the sky. I, too, once dwelt in the star-country, and one dark night as I was climbing back from the earth-country on your ladder, carrying my lamp on my back to light the way, when I was near the sky you cut the strands of the web and I fell to the earth with a great crash. That is why I have a great hump on my back and scars on my face, and because of this I have never been allowed to go back to the sky-country of the stars. I roam the earth at nights as a forest fairy just as I did in the olden days, for I have my former power still with me, and I still carry my lamp at my back; it is the starlight from the sky-country. I shall never get back to the star-country while I have life. But some day when my work on earth is done I shall go back. But although you were cruel to me I will give you food." The Spider Man remembered the nights he had cut the ladder strands, and he laughed to himself at the memory of the

star-fairies falling to earth with a great crash. But the man with the light knew that now he had his chance to take vengeance on the Spider Man. The latter did not suspect evil. He was glad to get food at last.

Then the humped man said, "I will give you four pots. You must not open them until you get home. They will then be filled with food, and thereafter always when you open them they will be packed with good food. And the food will never grow less." The Spider Man put the four pots in his bag and slinging it over his shoulder he set out for his home, well pleased with his success. After he had gone away, the humped man used his power to make him hungry. Yet for several days he travelled without opening the pots, for although he was almost starving he wished to do as the humped man had told him. At last he could wait no longer. He stopped near his home, took the pots out of the bag and opened them. They were filled with good food as he had been promised. In one was a fine meat stew; in another were many cooked vegetables; in another was bread made from Indian corn; and in another was luscious ripe fruit. He ate until he was full. He covered the pots, put them back in the bag, and hid the bag among the trees. Then he went home. He had meanwhile taken pity on his people and he decided to invite the Chief and all the tribe to a feast the next evening, for the pots would be full, and the food would never decrease, and there would be enough for all. He thought the people would regard him as a very wonderful man if he could supply them all with good food in their hunger.

When he reached his home his wives were very glad to see him back, and they at once brought him water, the only food they had. But he laughed them to scorn, and threw the water in their faces and said, "Oh, foolish women, I do not want water; it is not food for a great man like me. I have had a good meal of meat stew and corn bread and cooked vegetables and luscious ripe fruit. I know where much food is to be found, but I alone know. I can find food when all others fail, for I am a great man. Go forth and invite the Chief and all the people to a feast which I shall provide for them to-morrow night--a feast for all the land, for my food never grows less." They were all amazed when they heard his story, and the thought of his good meal greatly added to their hunger. But they went out and summoned all the tribe to a feast as he had told them.

The next night all the people gathered for the feast, for the news of

it had spread through all the land. They had taken no water that day, for they wished to eat well, and they were very hungry. They were as hungry as wild beasts in search of food. The Spider Man was very glad because the people praised him, and he proudly brought in his bag of pots. The people all waited hungrily and eagerly. But when he uncovered the first pot there was no food there; he uncovered the second pot, but there was no food there; he uncovered all the pots, but not a bit of food was in any of them. They were all empty, and in the bottom of each was a great gaping hole. Now it had happened in this way. When the humped man, the Star-fairy, had given the pots to the Spider Man, he knew well that the Spider Man would disobey his orders and that he would open the pots before he reached his home. He chuckled to himself, for he knew that now he could take vengeance on the web-weaver who had injured him. So when the Spider Man had left the pots among the trees, the humped man used his magic power and made holes in the pots, and the charm of the food was broken and all the food disappeared. When the people saw the empty pots they thought they had been purposely deceived. The remains of the food and the smell of stew and of fruit still clung to the pots. They thought the Spider Man had eaten all the food himself. So in their great hunger and their rage and their disappointment they fell upon him and beat him and bore him to the ground, while the humped man with the lamp at his back hiding behind the trees looked on and laughed in his glee. Then the people split the Spider Man's arms to the shoulders, and his legs to the thighs, so that he had eight limbs instead of four. And the humped man--the star-fairy named Fire-fly--came forth from behind the trees and standing over the fallen Spider Man he said, "Henceforth because of your cruelty to the star-people you will always crawl on eight legs, and you will have a fat round belly because of the water you have drunk; and sometimes you will live on top of the water. But you shall always eat only flies and insects. And you will always spin downwards but never upwards, and you will often try to get back to the star-country, but you shall always slip down again on the strand of yarn you have spun." Then Fire-fly flashed his light and went quickly away, opening and closing the shade of his lamp as he flitted among the trees. And to this day the Spider Man lives as the humped man of the lamp had spoken, because of the cruelty he practised on the star-fairies in the olden days.

from: The Project Gutenberg EBook of **Canadian Fairy Tales**, by Cyrus Macmillan



## KING O'TOOLE AND HIS GOOSE

Och, I thought all the world, far and near, had heerd of King O'Toole--well, well but the darkness of mankind is untollable! Well, sir, you must know, as you didn't hear it afore, that there was a king, called King O'Toole, who was a fine old king in the old ancient times, long ago; and it was he that owned the churches in the early days. The king, you see, was the right sort; he was the real boy, and loved sport as he loved his life, and hunting in particular; and from the rising o' the sun, up he got, and away he went over the mountains after the deer; and fine times they were.

Well, it was all mighty good, as long as the king had his health; but, you see, in the course of time the king grew old, by raison he was stiff in his limbs, and when he got stricken in years, his heart failed him, and he was lost entirely for want o' diversion, because he couldn't go a-hunting no longer; and, by dad, the poor king was obliged at last to get a goose to divert him. Oh, you may laugh, if you like, but it's truth I'm telling you; and the way the goose diverted him was this-a-way: You see, the goose used to swim across the lake, and go diving for trout and catch fish on a Friday for the king, and flew every other day round about the lake, diverting the poor king. All went on mighty well until, by dad, the goose got stricken in years like her master, and couldn't divert him no longer, and then it was that the poor king was lost entirely. The king was walkin' one mornin' by the edge of the lake, lamentin' his cruel fate, and thinking of drowning himself, that could get no diversion in life, when all of a sudden, turning round the corner, whom should he meet but a mighty decent young man coming up to him.

"God save you," says the king to the young man.

"God save you kindly, King O'Toole," says the young man.

"True for you," says the king. "I am King O'Toole," says he, "prince and plennypennyinchery of these parts," says he; "but how came ye to know that?" says he.

"Oh, never mind," says St. Kevin.

You see it was Saint Kevin, sure enough--the saint himself in disguise, and nobody else. "Oh, never mind," says he, "I know more than that. May I make bold to ask how is your goose, King O'Toole?" says he.

"Blur-an-agers, how came ye to know about my goose?" says the king.

"Oh, no matter; I was given to understand it," says Saint Kevin.

After some more talk the king says, "What are you?"

"I'm an honest man," says Saint Kevin.

"Well, honest man," says the king, "and how is it you make your money so aisy?"

"By makin' old things as good as new," says Saint Kevin.

"Is it a tinker you are?" says the king.

"No," says the saint; "I'm no tinker by trade, King O'Toole; I've a better trade than a tinker," says he--"what would you say," says he, "If I made your old goose as good as new?"

My dear, at the word of making his goose as good as new, you'd think the poor old king's eyes were ready to jump out of his head. With that the king whistled, and down came the poor goose, just like a hound, waddling up to the poor cripple, her master, and as like him as two peas. The minute the saint clapt his eyes on the goose, "I'll do the job for you," says he, "King O'Toole."

"By \_Jaminee\_!" says King O'Toole, "if you do, I'll say you're the cleverest fellow in the seven parishes."

"Oh, by dad," says St. Kavin, "you must say more nor that--my horn's not so soft all out," says he, "as to repair your old goose for nothing;" "what'll you gi' me if I do the job for you?--that's the chat," says St. Kavin.

"I'll give you whatever you ask," says the king "isn't that fair?"

"Divil a fairer," says the saint, "that's the way to do business. Now," says he, "this is the bargain I'll make with you, King O'Toole: will you gi' me all the ground the goose flies over, the first offer, after I make her as good as new?"

"I will," says the king.

"You won't go back o' your word?" says St. Kavin.

"Honour bright!" says King O'Toole, holding out his fist.

"Honour bright!" says St. Kavin, back again, "it's a bargain. Come here!" says he to the poor old goose--"come here, you unfortunate ould cripple, and it's I that'll make you the sporting bird." With that, my dear, he took up the goose by the two wings--"Criss o' my cross an you," says he, markin' her to grace with the blessed sign at the same minute--and throwing her up in the air, "whew," says he, jist givin' her a blast to help her; and with that, my jewel, she took to her heels, flyin' like one o' the eagles themselves, and cutting as many capers as a swallow before a shower of rain.

Well, my dear, it was a beautiful sight to see the king standing with his mouth open, looking at his poor old goose flying as light as a lark, and better than ever she was; and when she lit at his feet, patted her on the head, and "\_Ma vourneen\_", says he "but you are the \_darlint\_ o' the world."

"And what do you say to me," says Saint Kavin, "for making her the like?"

"By Jabers," says the king, "I say nothing beats the art o' man, barring the bees."



"And do you say no more nor that?" says Saint Kavin.

"And that I'm beholden to you," says the king.

"But will you gi'e me all the ground the goose flew over?" says Saint Kavin.

"I will," says King O'Toole, "and you're welcome to it," says he, "though it's the last acre I have to give."

"But you'll keep your word true," says the saint.

"As true as the sun," says the king.

"It's well for you, King O'Toole, that you said that word," says he; "for if you didn't say that word, the divil the bit o' your goose would ever fly agin."

When the king was as good as his word, Saint Kavin was pleased with him, and then it was that he made himself known to the king. "And," says he, "King O'Toole, you're a decent man, for I only came here to try you. You don't know me," says he, "because I'm disguised."

"Musha! then," says the king, "who are you?"

"I'm Saint Kavin," said the saint, blessing himself.

"Oh, queen of heaven!" says the king, making the sign of the cross between his eyes, and falling down on his knees before the saint; "is it the great Saint Kavin," says he, "that I've been discoursing all this time without knowing it," says he, "all as one as if he was a lump of a \_gossoon\_?--and so you're a saint?" says the king.

"I am," says Saint Kavin.

"By Jabers, I thought I was only talking to a dacent boy," says the king.

"Well, you know the difference now," says the saint. "I'm Saint Kavin," says he, "the greatest of all the saints."

And so the king had his goose as good as new, to divert him as long as he lived; and the saint supported him after he came into his property, as I told you, until the day of his death--and that was soon after; for the poor goose thought he was catching a trout one Friday; but, my jewel, it was a mistake he made--and instead of a trout, it was a thieving horse-eel; and instead of the goose killing a trout for the king's supper--by dad, the eel killed the king's goose--and small blame to him; but he didn't ate her, because he darn't ate what Saint Kavin had laid his blessed hands on.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of **Celtic Folk and Fairy Tales**, by Various



## **THE VENGEANCE OF THE GODDESS**

In a certain temple in the northern part of the Empire, there once lived a famous priest named Hien-Chung, whose reputation had spread far and wide, not merely for the sanctity of his life, but also for the supernatural powers which he was known to possess, and which he had exhibited on several remarkable occasions. Men would have marvelled less about him had they known that the man dressed in the long slate-coloured robe, with shaven head, and saintly-looking face, over which no one had ever seen a smile flicker, was in reality a pilgrim on his way to the Western Heaven, which he hoped to reach in time, and to become a fairy there.

One night Hien-Chung lay asleep in a room opening out of the main hall in which the great image of the Goddess of Mercy, with her benevolent, gracious face, sat enshrined amidst the darkness that lay thickly over the temple. All at once, there stood before him a most striking and stately-looking figure. The man had a royal look about him, as though

he had been accustomed to rule. On his head there was a crown, and his dress was such as no mere subject would ever be allowed to wear.

Hien-Chung gazed at him in wonder, and was at first inclined to believe that he was some evil spirit who had assumed this clever disguise in order to deceive him. As this thought flashed through his mind, the man began to weep. It was pitiable indeed to see this kingly person affected with such oppressive grief that the tears streamed down his cheeks, and with the tenderness that was distinctive of him Hien-Chung expressed his deep sympathy for a sorrow so profound.

"Three years ago," said his visitor, "I was the ruler of this 'Kingdom of the Black Flower.' I was indeed the founder of my dynasty, for I carved my own fortune with my sword, and made this little state into a kingdom. For a long time I was very happy, and my people were most devoted in their allegiance to me. I little dreamed of the sorrows that were coming on me, and the disasters which awaited me in the near future.

"Five years ago my kingdom was visited with a very severe drought. The rains ceased to fall; the streams which used to fall down the mountain-sides and irrigate the plains dried up; and the wells lost the fountains which used to fill them with water. Everywhere the crops failed, and the green herbage on which the cattle browsed was slowly blasted by the burning rays of the sun.

"The common people suffered in their homes from want of food, and many of the very poorest actually died of starvation. This was a source of great sorrow to me, and every day my prayers went up to Heaven, that it would send down rain upon the dried-up land and so deliver my people from death. I knew that this calamity had fallen on my kingdom because of some wrong that I had done, and so my heart was torn with remorse.

"One day while my mind was full of anxiety, a man suddenly appeared at my palace and begged my ministers to be allowed to have an audience with me. He said that it was of the utmost importance that he should see me, for he had come to propose a plan for the deliverance of my country.

"I gave orders that he should instantly be brought into my presence, when I asked him if he had the power to cause the rain to descend upon

the parched land.

"'Yes,' he replied, 'I have, and if you will step with me now to the front of your palace I will prove to you that I have the ability to do this, and even more.'

"Striding out to a balcony which overlooked the capital, and from which one could catch a view of the hills in the distance, the stranger lifted up his right hand towards the heavens and uttered certain words which I was unable to understand.

"Instantly, and as if by magic, a subtle change crept through the atmosphere. The sky became darkened, and dense masses of clouds rolled up and blotted out the sun. The thunder began to mutter, and vivid flashes of lightning darted from one end of the heavens to the other, and before an hour had elapsed the rain was descending in torrents all over the land, and the great drought was at an end.

"My gratitude to this mysterious stranger for the great deliverance he had wrought for my kingdom was so great that there was no favour which I was not willing to bestow upon him. I gave him rooms in the palace, and treated him as though he were my equal. I had the truest and the tenderest affection for him, and he seemed to be equally devoted to me.

"One morning we were walking hand in hand in the royal gardens. The peach blossoms were just out, and we were enjoying their perfume and wandering up and down amongst the trees which sent forth such exquisite fragrance.

"As we sauntered on, we came by-and-by upon a well which was hidden from sight by a cluster of oleander trees. We stayed for a moment to peer down its depths and to catch a sight of the dark waters lying deep within it. Whilst I was gazing down, my friend gave me a sudden push and I was precipitated head first into the water at the bottom. The moment I disappeared, he took a broad slab of stone and completely covered the mouth of the well. Over it he spread a thick layer of earth, and in this he planted a banana root, which, under the influence of the magic powers he possessed, in the course of a few hours had developed into a full-grown tree. I have lain dead in the well now for three years, and during all that time no one has arisen to avenge my wrong or to bring me deliverance."

"But have your ministers of State made no efforts during all these three years to discover their lost king?" asked Hien-Chung. "And what about your wife and family? Have they tamely submitted to have you disappear without raising an outcry that would resound throughout the whole kingdom? It seems to me inexplicable that a king should vanish from his palace and that no hue and cry should be raised throughout the length and breadth of the land until the mystery should be solved and his cruel murder fully avenged."

"It is here," replied the spirit of the dead king, "that my enemy has shown his greatest cunning. The reason why men never suspect that any treason has been committed is because by his enchantments he has transformed his own appearance so as to become the exact counterpart of myself. The man who called down the rain and saved my country from drought and famine has simply disappeared, so men think, and I the King still rule as of old in my kingdom. Not the slightest suspicion as to the true state of things has ever entered the brain of anyone in the nation, and so the usurper is absolutely safe in the position he occupies to-day."

"But have you never appealed to Yam-lo, the ruler of the Land of Shadows?", asked Hien-Chung. "He is the great redresser of the wrongs and crimes of earth, and now that you are a spirit and immediately within his jurisdiction, you should lay your complaint before him and pray him to avenge the sufferings you have been called upon to endure."

"You do not understand," the spirit hastily replied. "The one who has wrought such ruin in my life is an evil spirit. He has nothing in common with men, but has been let loose from the region where evil spirits are confined to punish me for some wrong that I have committed in the past. He therefore knows the ways of the infernal regions, and is hand in glove with the rulers there, and even with Yam-lo himself. He is, moreover, on the most friendly terms with the tutelary God of my capital, and so no complaint of mine would ever be listened to for a moment by any of the powers who rule in the land of the dead."

"There is another very strong reason, too, why any appeal that I might make for justice would be disregarded. My soul has not yet been loosed from my body, but is still confined within it in the well. The courts of the Underworld would never recognize me, because I still belong to

this life, over which they have no control.

"Only to-day," he continued, "a friendly spirit whispered in my ear that my confinement in the well was drawing to a close, and that the three years I had been adjudged to stay there would soon be up. He strongly advised me to apply to you, for you are endowed, he said, with powers superior to those possessed by my enemy, and if you are only pleased to exercise them I shall speedily be delivered from his evil influence."

Now the Goddess of Mercy had sent Hien-Chung a number of familiar spirits to be a protection to him in time of need. Next morning, accordingly, he summoned the cleverest of these, whose name was Hing, in order to consult with him as to how the king might be delivered from the bondage in which he had been held for the three years.

"The first thing we have to do," said Hing, "is to get the heir to the Throne on our side. He has often been suspicious at certain things in the conduct of his supposed father, one of which is that for three years he has never been allowed to see his mother. All that is needed now is to get some tangible evidence to convince him that there is some mystery in the palace, and we shall gain him as our ally.

"I have been fortunate," he continued, "in obtaining one thing which we shall find very useful in inducing the Prince to listen to what we have to say to him about his father. You may not know it, but about the time when the King was thrown into the well, the seal of the kingdom mysteriously disappeared and a new one had to be cut.

"Knowing that you were going to summon me to discuss this case, I went down into the well at dawn this morning, and found the missing seal on the body of the King. Here it is, and now we must lay our plans to work on the mind of the son for the deliverance of the father. To-morrow I hear that the Prince is going out hunting on the neighbouring hills. In one of the valleys there is a temple to the Goddess of Mercy, and if you will take this seal and await his coming there, I promise you that I will find means to entice him to the shrine."

Next morning the heir to the Throne of the "Kingdom of the Black Flower" set out with a noisy retinue to have a day's hunting on the

well-wooded hills overlooking the capital. They had scarcely reached the hunting grounds when great excitement was caused by the sudden appearance of a remarkable-looking hare. It was decidedly larger than an ordinary hare, but the curious feature about it was its colour, which was as white as the driven snow.

No sooner had the hounds caught sight of it, than with loud barkings and bayings they dashed madly in pursuit. The hare, however, did not seem to show any terror, but with graceful bounds that carried it rapidly over the ground, it easily out-distanced the fleetest of its pursuers. It appeared, indeed, as though it were thoroughly enjoying the facility with which it could outrun the dogs, while the latter grew more and more excited as they always saw the quarry before them and yet could never get near enough to lay hold upon it.

Another extraordinary thing was that this hare did not seem anxious to escape. It took no advantage of undergrowth or of clumps of trees to hide the direction in which it was going. It managed also to keep constantly in view of the whole field; and when it had to make sudden turns in the natural windings of the road which led to a valley in the distance, where there stood a famous temple, it hesitated for a moment and allowed the baying hounds to come perilously near, before it darted off with the speed of lightning and left the dogs far behind it.

Little did the hunters dream that the beautiful animal which was giving them such an exciting chase was none other than the fairy Hing, who had assumed this disguise in order to bring the Prince to the lonely temple in the secluded valley, where, beyond the possibility of being spied upon by his father's murderer, the story of treachery could be told, and means be devised for his restoration to the throne.

Having arrived close to the temple, the mysterious hare vanished as suddenly as it had appeared, and not a trace was left to enable the dogs, which careered wildly round and round, to pick up the scent.

The Prince, who was a devoted disciple of the Goddess of Mercy, now dismounted and entered the temple, where he proceeded to burn incense before her shrine and in muttered tones to beseech her to send down blessings upon him.

After a time, he became considerably surprised to find that the

presiding priest of the temple, instead of coming forward to attend upon him and to show him the courtesies due to his high position, remained standing in a corner where the shadows were darkest, his eyes cast upon the ground and with a most serious look overspreading his countenance.

Accordingly, when he had finished his devotions to the Goddess, the Prince approached the priest, and asked him in a kindly manner if anything was distressing him.

"Yes," replied Hien-Chung, "there is, and it is a subject which materially affects your Royal Highness. If you will step for a moment into my private room, I shall endeavour to explain to you the matter which has filled my mind with the greatest possible anxiety."

When they entered the abbot's room, Hien-Chung handed the Prince a small box and asked him to open it and examine the article it contained.

Great was the Prince's amazement when he took it out and cast a hurried glance over it. A look of excitement passed over his face and he cried out, "Why, this is the great seal of the kingdom which was lost three years ago, and of which no trace could ever be found! May I ask how it came into your possession and what reason you can give for not having restored it to the King, who has long wished to discover it?"

"The answer to that is a long one, your Highness, and to satisfy you, I must go somewhat into detail."

Hien-Chung then told the Prince of the midnight visit his father had made him, and the tragic story of his murder by the man who was now posing as the King, and of his appeal to deliver him from the sorrows of the well in which he had been confined for three years.

"With regard to the finding of the seal," he continued, "my servant Hing, who is present, will describe how by the supernatural powers with which he is endowed, he descended the well only this very morning and discovered it on the body of your father."

"We have this absolute proof," he said, "that the vision I saw only two nights ago was not some imagination of the brain, but that it was really the King who appealed to me to deliver him from the power of an



enemy who seems bent upon his destruction.

"We must act, and act promptly," he went on, "for the man who is pretending to be the ruler of your kingdom is a person of unlimited ability, and as soon as he gets to know that his secret has been divulged, he will put into operation every art he possesses to frustrate our purpose.

"What I propose is that your Highness should send back the greater part of your retinue to the palace, with an intimation to the effect that you are going to spend the night here in a special service to the Goddess, whose birthday it fortunately happens to be to-day. After night has fallen upon the city, Hing shall descend into the well and bring the body of your father here. You will then have all the proof you need of the truth of the matter, and we can devise plans as to our future action."

A little after midnight, Hing having faithfully carried out the commission entrusted to him by Hien-Chung, arrived with the body of the King, which was laid with due ceremony and respect in one of the inner rooms of the temple. With his marvellous wonder-working powers and with the aid of invisible forces which he had been able to summon to his assistance, he had succeeded in transporting it from the wretched place where it had lain so long to the friendly temple of the Goddess of Mercy.

The Prince was deeply moved by the sight of his father's body. Fortunately it had suffered no change since the day when it was thrown to the bottom of the well. Not a sign of decay could be seen upon the King's noble features. It seemed as though he had but fallen asleep, and presently would wake up and talk to them as he used to do. The fact that in some mysterious way the soul had not been separated from the body accounted for its remarkable preservation. Nevertheless to all appearance the King was dead, and the great question now was how he could be brought back to life, so that he might be restored to his family and his kingdom.

"The time has come," said Hien-Chung, "when heroic measures will have to be used if the King is ever to live again. Two nights ago he made a passionate and urgent request to me to save him, for one of the gods informed him that I was the only man who could do so. So far, we have

got him out of the grip of the demon that compassed his death, and now it lies with me to provide some antidote which shall bring back the vital forces and make him a living man once more.

"I have never had to do with such a serious case as this before, but I have obtained from the Patriarch of the Taoist Church a small vial of the Elixir of Life, which has the marvellous property of prolonging the existence of whoever drinks it. We shall try it on the King and, as there is no sign of vital decay, let us hope that it will be effective in restoring him to life."

Turning to a desk that was kept locked, he brought out a small black earthenware bottle, from which he dropped a single drop of liquid on to the lips of the prostrate figure. In a few seconds a kind of rosy flush spread over the King's features. Another drop, and a look of life flashed over the pallid face. Still another, and after a short interval the eyes opened and looked with intelligence upon the group surrounding his couch. Still one more, and the King arose and asked how long he had been asleep, and how it came about that he was in this small room instead of being in his own palace.

He was soon restored to his family and to his position in the State, for the usurper after one or two feeble attempts to retain his power ignominiously fled from the country.

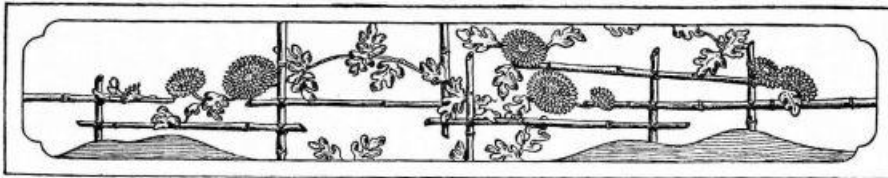
A short time after, Hien-Chung had a private interview with the King. "I am anxious," he said, "that your Majesty should understand the reason why such a calamity came into your life.

"Some years ago without any just reason you put to death a Buddhist priest. You never showed any repentance for the great wrong you had done, and so the Goddess sent a severe drought upon your Kingdom. You still remained unrepentant, and then she sent one of her Ministers to afflict you, depriving you of your home and your royal power. The man who pushed you down the well was but carrying out the instructions he had received from the Goddess. Your stay down the well for three years was part of the punishment she had decreed for your offence, and when the time was up, I was given the authority to release you.

"Kings as well as their subjects are under the great law of righteousness, and if they violate it they must suffer like other men.

I would warn your Majesty that unless you show some evidence that you have repented for taking away a man's life unjustly, other sorrows will most certainly fall upon you in the future."

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## THE FAIRIES ON THE GUMP

Down by St. Just, not far from Cape Cornwall and the sea, is a small hill,--or a very large mound would, perhaps, be the truer description,--called 'The Gump,' where the Small People used to hold their revels, and where our grandfathers and grandmothers used to be allowed to stand and look on and listen.

In those good old times fairies and ordinary people were all good friends together, and it is because they were all such friends and trusted one another so, that our grandfathers and grandmothers were able to tell their grandchildren so many tales about fairies, and piskies, and buccas, and all the rest of the Little People.

People believed in the Fairies in those days, so the Fairies in return often helped the people, and did them all sorts of kindnesses. Indeed, they would do so now if folks had not grown so learned and disbelieving. It seems strange that because they have got more knowledge of some matters, they should have grown more ignorant of others, and declare that there never were such things as Fairies, just because they have neither the eyes nor the minds to see them!

Of course, no one could expect the sensitive little creatures to appear when they are sneered at and scoffed at. All the same, though, they are as much about us as ever they were, and if you or I, who do believe in the Little People, were to go to the Gump on the right nights at the right

hour, we should see them feasting and dancing and holding their revels just as of old. If, though, you do go, you must be very careful to keep at a distance, and not to trespass on their fairy ground, for that is a great offence, and woe be to you if you offend them!

There was, once upon a time, a grasping, mean old fellow who did so, and pretty well he was punished for his daring. It is his story I am going to tell you, but I will not tell you his name, for that would be unpleasant for his descendants, but I will tell you this much,--he was a St. Just man, and no credit to the place either, I am sure.

Well, this old man used to listen to the tales the people told of the Fairies and their riches, and their wonderful treasures, until he could scarcely bear to hear any more, he longed so to have some of those riches for himself; and at last his covetousness grew so great, he said to himself he must and would have some, or he should die of vexation.

So one night, when the Harvest Moon was at the full, he started off alone, and very stealthily, to walk to the Gump, for he did not want his neighbours to know anything at all about his plans. He was very nervous, for it is a very desolate spot, but his greed was greater than his fear, and he made himself go forward, though he longed all the time to turn tail and hurry home to the safe shelter of his house and his bed.

When he was still at some distance from the enchanted spot, strains of the most exquisite music anyone could possibly imagine reached his ear, and as he stood listening it seemed to come nearer and nearer until, at last, it was close about him. The most wonderful part, though, of it all was that there was nothing to be seen, no person, no bird, not an animal even. The empty moor stretched away on every side, the Gump lay bare and desolate before him. The only living being on it that night was himself.

The music, indeed, seemed to come from under the ground, and such strange music it was, too, so gentle, so touching, it made the old miser weep, in spite of himself, and then, even while the tears were still running down his cheeks, he was forced to laugh quite merrily, and even to dance, though he certainly did not want to do either. After that it was not surprising that he found himself marching along, step and step, keeping time with the music as it played, first slowly and with stately tread, then fast and lively.

All the time, though, that he was laughing and weeping, marching or dancing, his wicked mind was full of thoughts as to how he should get at the fairy treasure.

At last, when he got close to the Gump, the music ceased, and suddenly, with a loud crashing noise which nearly scared the old man out of his senses, the whole hill seemed to open as if by magic, and in one instant every spot was lighted up. Thousands of little lights of all colours gleamed everywhere, silver stars twinkled and sparkled on every furze-bush, tiny lamps hung from every blade of grass. It was a more lovely sight than one ever sees nowadays, more lovely than any pantomime one has ever seen or ever will see. Then, out from the open hill marched troops of little Spriggans.

Spriggans, you must know, are the Small People who live in rocks and stones, and cromlechs, the most mischievous, thievish little creatures that ever lived, and woe betide anyone who meddles with their dwelling-places.

Well, first came all those Spriggans, then a large band of musicians followed by troops of soldiers, each troop carrying a beautiful banner, which waved and streamed out as though a brisk breeze were blowing, whereas in reality there was not a breath of wind stirring.

These hosts of Little People quickly took up their places in perfect order all about the Gump, and, though they appeared quite unconscious of his presence, a great number formed a ring all round the old man. He was greatly amazed, but, "Never mind," he thought, "they are such little whipper-snappers I can easily squash them with my foot if they try on any May-games with me."

As soon as the musicians, the Spriggans, and the soldiers had arranged themselves, out came a lot of servants carrying most lovely gold and silver vessels, goblets, too, cut out of single rubies, and diamonds, and emeralds, and every kind of precious stone. Then came others bearing rich meats and pastry, luscious fruits and preserves, everything, in fact, that one could think of that was dainty and appetizing. Each servant placed his burden on the tables in its proper place, then silently retired.

Can you not imagine how the glorious scene dazzled the old man, and how his eyes glistened, and his fingers itched to grab at some of the

wonderful things and carry them off? He knew that even one only of those flashing goblets would make him rich for ever.

He was just thinking that nowhere in the world could there be a more beautiful sight, when, lo and behold! the illumination became twenty times as brilliant, and out of the hill came thousands and thousands of exquisitely dressed ladies and gentlemen, all in rows, each gentleman leading a lady, and all marching in perfect time and order.

They came in companies of a thousand each, and each company was differently attired. In the first the gentlemen were all dressed in yellow satin covered with copper-coloured spangles, on their heads they wore copper-coloured helmets with waving, yellow plumes, and on their feet yellow shoes with copper heels. The flashing of the copper in the moonlight was almost blinding. Their companions all were dressed alike in white satin gowns edged with large turquoises, and on their tiny feet pale blue shoes with buckles formed of one large turquoise set in pearls.

The gentlemen conducted the ladies to their places on the Gump, and with a courtly bow left them, themselves retiring to a little distance. The next troop then came up, in this the gentlemen were all attired in black, trimmed with silver, silver helmets with black plumes, black stockings and silver shoes. Their ladies were dressed in pink embroidered in gold, with waving pink plumes in their hair, and golden buckles on their pink shoes. In the next troop the men were dressed in blue and white, the ladies in green, with diamonds all around the hem of the gown, diamonds flashing in their hair, and hanging in long ropes from their necks; on their green shoes single diamonds blazed and flashed.

So they came, troop after troop, more than I can describe, or you could remember, only I must tell you that the last of all were the most lovely. The ladies, all of whom had dark hair, were clad in white velvet lined with the palest violet silk, while round the hems of the skirts and on the bodices were bands of soft white swansdown. Swansdown also edged the little violet cloaks which hung from their shoulders. I cannot describe to you how beautiful they looked, with their rosy, smiling faces, and long black curls. On their heads they wore little silver crowns set with amethysts, amethysts, too, sparkled on their necks and over their gowns. In their hands they carried long trails of the lovely blossom of the wistaria. Their companions were clad in white and green, and in their left hands they carried silver rods with emerald stars at the top.

It really seemed at one time as though the troops of Little People would never cease pouring out of the hill. They did so at last, though, and as soon as all were in their places the music suddenly changed, and became more exquisite than ever.

The old man by this time seemed able to see more clearly, and hear more distinctly, and his sense of smell grew keener. Never were such flashing gems as here, never had any flowers such scents as these that were here.

There were now thousands of little ladies gathered on the Gump, and these all broke out into song at the same instant, such beautiful singing, too, so sweet and delicate. The words were in an unknown tongue, but the song was evidently about some great personages who were about to emerge from the amazing hill, for again it opened, and again poured forth a crowd of Small People.

First of all came a bevy of little girls in white gauze, scattering flowers, which, as soon as they touched the ground, sprang up into full life and threw out leaves and more flowers, full of exquisite scents; then came a number of boys playing on shells as though they were harps, and making ravishing music, while after them came hundreds and hundreds of little men clad in green and gold, followed by a perfect forest of banners spreading and waving on the air.

Then last, but more beautiful than all that had gone before, was carried a raised platform covered with silk embroidered with real gold, and edged with crystals, and on the platform were seated a prince and princess of such surpassing loveliness that no words can be found to describe them. They were dressed in the richest velvet, and covered with precious stones which blazed and sparkled in the myriad lights until the eye could scarce bear to look at them.

Over her lovely robe the princess's hair flowed down to the floor, where it rested in great shining, golden waves. In her hand she held a golden sceptre, on the top of which blazed a diamond as large as a walnut, while the prince carried one with a sapphire of equal size. After a deal of marching backwards and forwards, the platform was placed on the highest point of the Gump, which was now a hill of flowers, and every fairy walked up and bowed, said something to the prince and princess, and passed on to a seat at the tables. And the marvel was that though there were so many

fairies present, there was not the slightest confusion amongst them, not one person moved out of place at the wrong moment. All was as quiet and well-arranged as could possibly be.

At length all were seated, whereupon the prince gave a signal, on which a number of footmen came forward carrying a table laden with dainty food in solid gold dishes, and wines in goblets of precious stones which they placed on the platform before the prince and princess. As soon as the royal pair began to eat, all the hosts around them followed their example, and such a merry, jovial meal they had. The viands disappeared as fast as they could go, laughter and talk sounded on all sides, and never a sign did any of them give that they knew that a human being was watching them. If they knew it, they showed not the slightest concern.

"Ah!" thought the old miser to himself. "I can't get all I'd like to, but if I could reach up to the prince's table I could get enough at one grab to set me up for life, and make me the richest man in St. Just parish!"

Stooping down, he slowly and stealthily dragged himself nearer and nearer to the table. He felt quite sure that no one could see him. What he himself did not see was that hundreds of wicked little Spriggans had tied ropes on to him, and were holding fast to the ends. He crawled and crawled so slowly and carefully that it took him some time to get over the ground, but he managed it at last, and got quite close up to the lovely little pair. Once there he paused for a moment and looked back,--perhaps to see if the way was clear for him to run when he had done what he meant to do. He was rather startled to find that all was as dark as dark could be, and that he could see nothing at all behind him. However, he tried to cheer himself by thinking that it was only that his eyes were dazzled by looking at the bright lights so long. He was even more startled, though, when he turned round to the Gump again, to find that every eye of all those hundreds and thousands of fairies on the hill was looking straight into his eyes.

At first he was really frightened, but as they did nothing but look, he told himself that they could not really be gazing at him, and grew braver with the thought. Then slowly bringing up his hat, as a boy does to catch a butterfly, he was just going to bring it down on the silken platform and capture prince and princess, table, gold dishes and all, when hark! A shrill whistle sounded, the old man's hand, with the hat in it, was paralysed in the air, so that he could not move it backwards or forwards,



and in an instant every light went out, and all was pitchy darkness.

There were a whir-r-r and a buzz, and a whir-r-r, as if a swarm of bees were flying by him, and the old man felt himself fastened so securely to the ground that, do what he would, he could not move an inch, and all the time he felt himself being pinched, and pricked, and tweaked from top to toe, so that not an inch of him was free from torment. He was lying on his back at the foot of the Gump, though how he got there he could never tell. His arms were stretched out and fastened down, so that he could not do anything to drive off his tormentors, his legs were so secured that he could not even relieve himself by kicking, and his tongue was tied with cords, so that he could not call out.

There he lay, no one knows how long, for to him it seemed hours, and no one else but the fairies knew anything about it. At last he felt a lot of little feet running over him, but whose they were he had no idea until something perched on his nose, and by the light of the moon he saw it was a Spriggan. His wicked old heart sank when he realized that he had got into their clutches, for all his life he had heard what wicked little creatures they were.

The little imp on his nose kicked and danced and stamped about in great delight at finding himself perched up so high. We all know how painful it is to have one's nose knocked, even ever so little, so you may imagine that the old miser did not enjoy himself at all. Master Spriggan did, though. He roared with laughter, as though he were having a huge joke, until at last, rising suddenly to his feet and standing on the tips of his tiny toes, he shouted sharply, "Away! away! I smell the day!" and to the old man's great relief off he flew in a great hurry, followed by all his mischievous little companions who had been playing games, and running races all over their victim's body.

Left at last to himself, the mortified old man lay for some time, thinking over all that had happened, trying to collect his senses, and wondering how he should manage to escape from his bonds, for he might lie there for a week without any human being coming near the place.

Till sunrise he lay there, trying to think of some plan, and then, what do you think he saw? Why, that he had not been tied down by ropes at all, but only by thousands of gossamer webs! And there they were now, all over him, with the dew on them sparkling like the diamonds that the princess

had worn the night before. And those dewdrop diamonds were all the jewels he got for his night's work.

When he made this discovery he turned over and groaned and wept with rage and shame, and never, to his dying day, could he bear to look at sparkling gold or gems, for the mere sight of them made him feel quite ill.

At last, afraid lest he should be missed, and searchers be sent out to look for him, he got up, brushed off the dewy webs, and putting on his battered old hat, crept slowly home. He was wet through with dew, cold, full of rheumatism, and very ashamed of himself, and very good care he took to keep that night's experiences to himself. No one must know his shame.

Years after, though, when he had become a changed man, and repented of his former greediness, he let out the story bit by bit to be a lesson to others, until his friends and neighbours, who loved to listen to anything about fairies, had gathered it all as I have told it to you here. And you may be quite sure it is all true, for the old man was not clever enough to invent it.

from: The Project Gutenberg eBook, **Cornwall's Wonderland**, by Mabel Quiller-Couch



## THE WOODMAN AND THE SERPENT

One wintry day a Woodman was tramping home from his work when he saw something black lying on the snow. When he came closer he saw it was a Serpent to all appearance dead. But he took it up and put it in his bosom to warm while he hurried home. As soon as he got indoors he put the Serpent down on the hearth before the fire. The children watched it and saw it slowly come to life again. Then one of them stooped down to stroke it, but the

Serpent raised its head and put out its fangs and was about to sting the child to death. So the Woodman seized his axe, and with one stroke cut the Serpent in two. "Ah," said he,

"No gratitude from the wicked."

From the Project Gutenberg Etext of **Aesop's Fables** (2nd edition)



### **THE THREE DAUGHTERS OF THE KING OF THE EAST, AND THE SON OF A KING IN ERIN.**

There was once a king in Erin, and he had an only son. While this son was a little child his mother died.

After a time the king married and had a second son.

The two boys grew up together; and as the elder was far handsomer and better than the younger, the queen became jealous, and was for banishing him out of her sight.

The king's castle stood near the shore of Loch Erne, and three swans came every day to be in the water and swim in the lake. The elder brother used to go fishing; and once when he sat at the side of the water, the three swans made young women of themselves, came to where he sat, and talked to the king's son.

The queen had a boy minding cows in the place, and when he went home that night he told about what he had seen,--that there were three young women at the lake, and the king's son was talking to the three that day. Next morning the queen called the cowboy to her, and said: "Here is a

pin of slumber; and do you stick it in the clothes of the king's son before the young women come, and when they go away, take out the pin and bring it back to me."

That day when the cowboy saw the three young women coming, he went near and threw the pin, which stuck in the clothes of the king's son. That instant he fell asleep on the ground.

When the young women came, one of them took a towel, dipped it in the cold water of the lake, and rubbed his face; but she could not rouse him. When their time came to go, they were crying and lamenting because the young man was asleep; and one of the three put a gold pin in his bosom, so that when he woke up he would find it and keep her in mind.

After they had gone a couple of hours, the cowboy came up, took out the sleeping-pin, and hurried off. The king's son woke up without delay; and finding the gold pin in his bosom, he knew the young woman had come to see him.

Next day he fished and waited again. When the cowboy saw the young women coming out of the lake, he stole up a second time, and threw the pin, which stuck in his clothes, and that moment he was drowsy and fell asleep. When the young women came he was lying on the ground asleep. One of them rubbed him with a towel dipped in the water of the lake; but no matter what she did, he slept on, and when they had to go, she put a gold ring in his bosom. When the sisters were leaving the lake, and had put on their swan-skins and become swans, they all flew around him and flapped their wings in his face to know could they rouse him; but there was no use in trying.

After they had gone, the cowboy came and took out the sleeping-pin. When the king's son was awake he put his hand in his bosom, found the keepsake, and knew that the sisters had come to him.

When he went fishing the third day, he called up the cowboy and said: "I fall asleep every day. I know something is done to me. Now do you tell me all. In time I'll reward you well. I know my stepmother sends something by you that takes my senses away."

"I would tell," said the cowboy, "but I'm in dread my mistress might kill or banish me."

"She will not, for I'll put you in the way she'll not harm you. You see my fishing-bag here? Now throw the pin, which I know you have, towards me, and hit the bag."

The cowboy did as he was told, and threw the pin into the fishing-bag, where it remained without harm to any one. The cowboy went back to his cattle, and the prince fished on as before. The three swans were out in the middle of the lake swimming around for themselves in the water, and the prince moved on, fishing, till he came to a bend in the shore. On one side of him a tongue of land ran out into the lake. The swans came to the shore, leaving the piece of land between themselves and the prince. Then they took off their swan-skins, were young women, and bathed in the lake.

After that they came out, put on the dress of young women, and went to where the king's son was fishing.

He spoke to them, and asked where were they from, in what place were they born, and why were they swans.

They said: "We are three sisters, daughters of the king of the East, and we have two brothers. Our mother died, and our father married again, and had two other daughters; and these two are not so good looking nor so well favored as we, and their mother was in dread they wouldn't get such fine husbands as we, so she enchanted us, and now we are going about the world from lake to lake in the form of swans."

Then the eldest of the three sisters said to the king's son: "What kind are you, and where were you born?"

"I was born in Erin," said he; "and when I was a little boy my mother died, my father married again and had a second son, and that son wasn't to the eye what I was, and my stepmother was for banishing me from my father's house because she thought her own son was not so good as I was, and I am fishing here every day by the lake to keep out of her sight."

"Well," said the eldest sister, "I thought you were a king's son, and so I came to you in my own form to know could we go on in the world together."

"I don't know yet what to do," said the king's son.

"Well, be sure of your mind to-morrow, for that will be the last day for me here."

When the cowboy was going home, the king's son gave him the sleeping-pin for the stepmother. When he had driven in the cattle, the cowboy told the queen that the young man had fallen asleep as on the two other days.

But there was an old witch in the place who was wandering about the lake that day. She saw everything, went to the queen, and told her how the three swans had made young women of themselves, and talked with her stepson.

When the queen heard the old witch, she fell into a terrible rage at the cowboy for telling her a lie, and banished him out of her sight forever. Then she got another cowboy, and sent him off with the sleeping-pin next day. When he came near the lake, the king's son tried to drive him off; but the cowboy threw the sleeping-pin into his clothes, and he fell down near the edge of the water without sight or sense.

The three sisters came, and found him sleeping. They rubbed him, and threw water on his face, but they could not wake him. And the three were lamenting sorely, for they had brought a swan's skin with them that day, so the king's son might make a swan of himself and fly away with them, for this was their last day at that place; but they could do nothing now, for he lay there dead asleep on the ground before them.

The eldest sister pulled out her handkerchief, and the falling tears dropped on it. Then she took a knife, and cut one of the nipples from her breast. The second sister wrote on the handkerchief: "Keep this in mind till you get more account from us." They put it in his bosom and went away.

As soon as the sisters had gone, the cowboy came, drew out the pin, and hurried away. The stepmother was always trying to banish the king's son, hoping that something might happen to him, and her own son be the heir. So now he went off and wandered away through Erin, always inquiring for the eldest sister, but never could find her.

At the end of seven years he came home, and was fishing at the side of

Loch Erne again, when a swan flew up to him and said: "Your love is lying on her death-bed, unless you go to save her. She is bleeding from the breast, and you must go to her now. Go straight to the East!"

The king's son went straight to the East, and on the way there rose up storm and fog against him; but they did not stop him. He was going on always, and when he was three weeks' journey from his father's castle he stumbled one dark, misty day and fell over a ditch. When he rose up there stood on the other side of the ditch before him a little horse, all bridled and saddled, with a whip on the saddle. The horse spoke up and said: "If you are the king's son, I was sent here to meet you, and carry you to the castle of the king of the East. There is a young woman at the castle who thinks it long till she sees you. Now ask me no questions, for I'm not at liberty to talk to you till I bring you to the East."

"I suppose we are to be a long time going?" said the king's son.

"Don't trouble yourself about the going; I'll take you safely. Sit on my back now, and be sure you're a good rider, and you'll not be long on the road. This is my last word."

They went on, and were going always; and as he travelled, the prince met the wind that was before him, and the wind that blew behind could not come up with him. When he was hungry the pommel of the saddle opened, and he found the best of eating inside.

They went on sweeping over the world for two weeks, and when they were near the East the horse said: "Get down from my back now, for it's tired I am."

"How far are we from the castle?" asked the king's son.

"Five days' journey," answered the horse. "When you come to the castle, don't stop a moment till you ask where the young woman is lying; and tell them to be sure to give good stabling and food to the horse. Come and see me yourself every day. If you don't, there will be nothing for me but fasting; and that's what I don't like."

When the king's son came to the castle it was evening. The two younger sisters welcomed him. (These were two of the swans at the lake in Erin,

and now at home by the enchantment of their stepmother. They were swans in the daytime, and women only at night, so as not to be under the eye of young men when these came to see the stepmother's own daughters.) They said: "Our sister is on an island, and we'll go to her." They got a boat for the young man, and went with him to where their sister was lying. They said to her: "The son of the king of Erin is here."

"Let him come in, that I may look at him," said she.

The king's son went in, and when she saw him she was glad. "Have you anything that belongs to me?" asked she.

"I have."

"Then throw it on my breast."

He threw the handkerchief on her breast and went away. Next day she rose from the bed as well as ever. On the third day after his arrival, the son of the king of Erin married the eldest daughter of the king of the East, and the stepmother's enchantment was destroyed; and there was the grandest wedding that ever was seen in that kingdom.

The king's son, thinking only of his bride, forgot all about the horse that had brought him over the long road. When at last he went to see him, the stable was empty; the horse had gone. And neither his father in Erin nor the stepmother came to his mind, he was living so pleasantly in the East. But after he had been there a long time, and a son and a daughter had been born to him, he remembered his father. Then he made up his mind not to let the stepmother's son be heir to the kingdom in place of himself. So taking his wife and children, he left the East and travelled to Erin. He stopped on the road, and sent word to the father that he was coming.

When the stepmother heard the news, a great weakness came on her. She fell into a fit and died.

The king's son waited in a convenient place till the funeral was over, and then he came to the castle and lived with his father. He was not long in the place when he sent messengers to know could they find the cowboy that the stepmother banished for telling about the sleeping-pin. They brought the cowboy to the castle, and the king made him his



coachman.

The cowboy was not twelve months in his new place before he married. Then the king's son gave him a fine piece of land to live on, with six cows and four horses. There was not a happier man in the kingdom than the cowboy. When the father died, the king's son became king in Erin himself.

from: The Project Gutenberg eBook, **Myths and Folk Tales of Ireland**, by Jeremiah Curtin



### **THE MAGICIAN WITH THE SWINE'S HEAD.**

When the Son of the Chan had, as before, seized upon Ssidi, and was carrying him away, Ssidi spoke as formerly, but the Son of the Chan shook his head, without uttering a word, and Ssidi began the following relation:--

"A long while since there lived in a happy country a man and a woman. The man had many bad qualities, and cared for nothing but eating, drinking, and sleeping. At last his wife said unto him, 'By thy mode of life thou hast wasted all thine inheritance. Arise thee, then, from thy bed, and while I am in the fields, go you out and look about you!'

"As he, therefore, according to these words, was looking about him, he saw a multitude of people pass behind the pagoda with their herds; and birds, foxes, and dogs crowding and noising together around a particular spot. Thither he went, and there found a bladder of butter; so he took it home and placed it upon the shelf. When his wife returned and saw the bladder of butter upon the shelf, she asked, 'Where found you this bladder of butter?' To this he replied, 'I did according to your word, and found this.' Then said the woman 'Thou

went out but for an instant, and hast already found thus much.'

"Then the man determined to display his abilities, and said, 'Procure me then a horse, some clothes, and a bloodhound.' The wife provided them accordingly; and the man taking with him, besides these, his bow, cap, and mantle, seated himself on horseback, led the hound in a leash, and rode forth at random. After he had crossed over several rivers he espied a fox. 'Ah,' thought he, 'that would serve my wife for a cap.'

"So saying, he pursued the fox, and when it fled into a hamster's hole, the man got off his horse, placed his bow, arrows, and clothes upon the saddle, fastened the bloodhound to the bridle, and covered the mouth of the hole with his cap. The next thing he did was to take a large stone, and hammer over the hole with it; this frightened the fox, which ran out and fled with the cap upon its head. The hound followed the fox, and drew the horse along with it, so that they both vanished in an instant, and the man was left without any clothes.

"After he had turned back a long way, he reached the country of a mighty Chan, entered the Chan's stable, and concealed himself in a stack of hay, so that merely his eyes were left uncovered. Not long afterwards, the beloved of the Chan was walking out, and wishing to look at a favourite horse, she approached close to the hayrick, placed the talisman of life of the Chan's kingdom upon the ground, left it there, and returned back to the palace without recollecting it. The man saw the wonderful stone, but was too lazy to pick it up. At sunset the cows came by, and the stone was beaten into the ground. Some time afterwards a servant came and cleansed the place, and the wonderful stone was cast aside upon a heap.

"On the following day the people were informed, by the beating of the kettledrums, that the beloved of the Chan had lost the wonderful stone. At the same time, all the magicians and soothsayers and interpreters of signs were summoned, and questioned upon the subject. On hearing this, the man in the hayrick crept out as far as his breast, and when the people thronged around him and asked, 'What hast thou learned?' he replied, 'I am a magician.' On hearing these words they exclaimed, 'Because the wondrous stone of the Chan is missing, all the magicians in the country are summoned to appear before him. Do you then draw nigh unto the Chan.' The man said, 'I have no clothes.'

Hereupon the whole crowd hastened to the Chan, and announced unto him thus: 'In the hayrick there lieth a magician who has no clothes. This magician would draw nigh unto you, but he has nought to appear in.' The Chan said, 'Send unto him this robe of cloth, and let him approach.' It was done.

"The man was fetched, and after he had bowed down to the Chan, he was asked what he needed for the performance of his magic charms. To this question he replied, 'For the performance of my magic charms, it is needful that I should have the head of a swine, some cloths of five colours, and some baling' (a sacred figure of dough or paste). When all these things were prepared, the magician deposited the swine's head at the foot of a tree, dressed it with the cloths of five colours, fastened on the large baling, and passed the whole of three nights in meditation. On the day appointed, all the people assembled, and the magician having put on a great durga (cloak), placed himself, with the swine's head in his hand, in the street. When they were all assembled together, the magician, showing the swine's head, said, 'Here not and there not.' All were gladdened at hearing these words. 'Because, therefore,' said the magician, 'the wonderful stone is not to be found among the people, we must seek for it elsewhere.'

"With these words the magician, still holding the swine's head in his hand, drew nigh unto the palace, and the Chan and his attendants followed him, singing songs of rejoicing. When, at last, the magician arrived at the heap, he stood suddenly still, and exclaimed, 'There lies the wonderful stone.' Then, first removing some of the earth, he drew forth the stone, and cleansed it. 'Thou art a mighty magician,' joyfully exclaimed all who beheld it. 'Thou art the master of magic with the swine's head. Lift up thyself that thou mayest receive thy reward.' The Chan said, 'Thy reward shall be whatsoever thou wilt.' The magician, who thought only of the property he had lost, said, 'Give unto me a horse, with saddle and bridle, a bow and arrows, a cap, a mantle, a hound, and a fox. Such things give unto me.' At these words the Chan exclaimed, 'Give him all that he desireth.' This was done, and the magician returned home with all that he desired, and with two elephants, one carrying meat, and the other butter.

"His wife met him close to his dwelling, with brandy for him to drink, and said, 'Now, indeed, thou art become a mighty man.' Thereupon they went into the house, and when they had laid themselves down to sleep,

the wife said to him, 'Where hast thou found so much flesh and so much butter?' Then her husband related to her circumstantially the whole affair, and she answered him saying, 'Verily, thou art a stupid ass. To-morrow I will go with a letter to the Chan.'

"The wife accordingly wrote a letter, and in the letter were the following words:--'Because it was known unto me that the lost wondrous stone retained some evil influence over the Chan, I have, for the obviating of that influence, desired of him the dog and the fox. What I may receive for my reward depends upon the pleasure of the Chan.'

"The Chan read the letter through, and sent costly presents to the magician. And the magician lived pleasantly and happily.

"Now in a neighbouring country there dwelt seven Chans, brethren. Once upon a time they betook themselves, for pastime, to an extensive forest, and there they discovered a beauteous maiden with a buffalo, and they asked, 'What are you two doing here? Whence come you?' The maiden answered, 'I come from an eastern country, and am the daughter of a Chan. This buffalo accompanies me.' At these words these others replied, 'We are the seven brethren of a Chan, and have no wife. Wilt thou be our wife?'[1] The maiden answered, 'So be it.' But the maiden and the buffalo were two Mangusch (a species of evil spirit like the Schumnu), and were seeking out men whom they might devour. The male Mangusch was a buffalo, and the female, she who became wife to the brethren.

[1] It is in accordance with the customs of Thibet for a woman of that country to have several husbands.

"After the Mangusch had slain, yearly, one of the brethren of the Chan, there was only one remaining. And because he was suffering from a grievous sickness, the ministers consulted together and said, 'For the sickness of the other Chans we have tried all means of cure, and yet have found no help, neither do we in this case know what to advise. But the magician with the swine's head dwells only two mountains off from us, and he is held in great estimation; let us, without further delay, send for him to our assistance.'

"Upon this four mounted messengers were despatched for the magician,

and when they arrived at his dwelling, they made known to him the object of their mission. 'I will,' said the magician, 'consider of this matter in the course of the night, and will tell you in the morning what is to be done.'

"During the night he related to his wife what was required of him, and his wife said, 'You are looked upon, up to this time, as a magician of extraordinary skill; but from this time there is an end to your reputation. However, it cannot be helped, so go you must.'

"On the following morning the magician said to the messengers, 'During the night-time I have pondered upon this matter, and a good omen has presented itself to me in a dream. Let me not tarry any longer but ride forth to-day.' The magician, thereupon, equipped himself in a large cloak, bound his hair together on the crown of his head, carried in his left hand the rosary, and in his right the swine's head, enveloped in the cloths of five colours.

"When in this guise he presented himself before the dwelling-place of the Chan, the two Mangusch were sorely frightened, and thought to themselves, 'This man has quite the appearance, quite the countenance, of a man of learning.' Then the magician, first placing a baling on the pillow of the bed, lifted up the swine's head, and muttered certain magic words.

"The wife of the Chan seeing this discontinued tormenting the soul of the Chan, and fled in all haste out of the room. The Chan, by this conduct being freed from the pains of sickness, sank into a sound sleep. 'What is this?' exclaimed the magician, filled with affright. 'The disease has grown worse, the sick man uttereth not a sound; the sick man hath departed.' Thus thinking, he cried, 'Chan, Chan!' But because the Chan uttered no sound, the magician seized the swine's head, vanished through the door, and entered the treasure-chamber. No sooner had he done so, than 'Thief, thief!' sounded in his ears, and the magician fled into the kitchen; but the cry of 'Stop that thief! stop that thief!' still followed him. Thus pursued the magician thought to himself, 'This night it is of no use to think of getting away, so I will, therefore, conceal myself in a corner of the stable.' Thus thinking, he opened the door, and there found a buffalo, that lay there as if wearied with a long journey. The magician took the swine's head, and struck the buffalo three times between the horns,

whereupon the buffalo sprang up and fled like the wind.

"But the magician followed after the buffalo, and when he approached the spot where he was, he heard the male Mangusch say to his female companion, 'Yonder magician knew that I was in the stable; with his frightful swine's head he struck me three blows--so that it was time for me to escape from him.' And the Chan's wife replied, 'I too am so afraid, because of his great knowledge, that I would not willingly return; for, of a certainty, things will go badly with us. To-morrow he will gather together the men with weapons and arms, and will say unto the women, "Bring hither firing;" when this is done he will say, "Lead the buffalo hither." And when thou appearest, he will say unto thee, "Put off the form thou hast assumed." And because all resistance would be useless, the people perceiving thy true shape will fall upon thee with swords, and spears, and stones; and when they have put thee to death, they will consume thee with fire. At last the magician will cause me to be dragged forth and consumed with fire. Oh, but I am sore afraid!'

"When the magician heard these words, he said to himself, 'After this fashion may the thing be easily accomplished.' Upon this he betook himself, with the swine's head to the Chan, lifted up the baling, murmured his words of magic, and asked, 'How is it now with the sickness of the Chan?' And the Chan replied, 'Upon the arrival of the master of magic the sickness passed away, and I have slept soundly.' Then the magician spake as follows: 'To-morrow, then, give this command to thy ministers, that they collect the whole of the people together, and that the women be desired to bring firing with them.'

"When, in obedience to these directions, there were two lofty piles of fagots gathered together, the magician said, 'Place my saddle upon the buffalo.' Then the magician rode upon the saddled buffalo three times around the assembled people, then removed the saddle from the buffalo, smote it three times with the swine's head, and said, 'Put off the form thou hast assumed.'

"At these words the buffalo was transformed into a fearful ugly Mangusch. His eyes were bloodshot, his upper tusks descended to his breast, his bottom tusks reached up to his eyelashes, so that he was fearful to behold. When the people had hewed this Mangusch to pieces with sword and with arrow, with spear and with stone, and his body was

consumed upon one of the piles of fagots, then said the magician, 'Bring forth the wife of the Chan.' And with loud cries did the wife of the Chan come forth, and the magician smote her with the swine's head, and said, 'Appear in thine own form!' Immediately her long tusks and bloodshot eyes exhibited the terrific figure of a female Mangusch.

"After the wife of the Chan had been cut in pieces, and consumed by fire, the magician mounted his horse; but the people bowed themselves before him, and strewed grain over him, presented him with gifts, and regaled him so on every side, that he was only enabled to reach the palace of the Chan on the following morning. Then spake the Chan, full of joy, to the magician, 'How can I reward you for the great deed that thou hast done?' And the magician answered, 'In our country there are but few nose-sticks for oxen to be found. Give me, I pray you, some of these nose-sticks.' Thus spake he, and the Chan had him conducted home with three sacks of nose-sticks, and seven elephants bearing meat and butter.

"Near unto his dwelling his wife came with brandy to meet him; and when she beheld the elephants, she exclaimed, 'Now, indeed, thou art become a mighty man.' Then they betook themselves to their house, and at night-time the wife of the magician asked him, 'How camest thou to be presented with such gifts?' The magician replied, 'I have cured the sickness of the Chan, and consumed with fire two Mangusch.' At these words she replied, 'Verily, thou hast behaved very foolishly. After such a beneficial act, to desire nothing but nose-sticks for cattle! To-morrow I myself will go to the Chan.'

"On the morrow the wife drew near unto the Chan, and presented unto him a letter from the magician, and in this letter stood the following words:--'Because the magician was aware that of the great evil of the Chan a lesser evil still remained behind, he desired of him the nose-sticks. What he is to receive as a reward depends upon the pleasure of the Chan.'

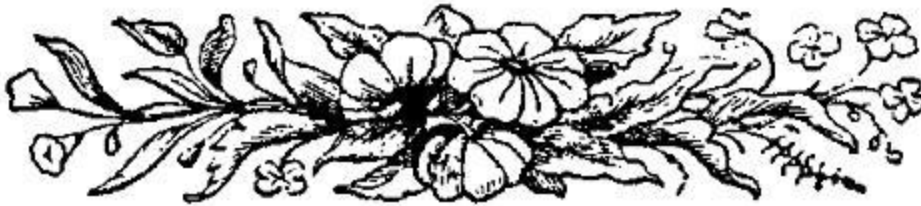
"'He is right,' replied the Chan, and he summoned the magician, with his father and mother, and all his relations before him, and received them with every demonstration of honour. 'But for you I should have died; the kingdom would have been annihilated; the ministers and all the people consumed as the food of the Mangusch. I, therefore, will honour thee,' and he bestowed upon him proofs of his favour."

"Both man and wife were intelligent," exclaimed the Son of the Chan.

"Ruler of Destiny," replied Ssidi, "thou hast spoken words! Ssarwala missdood jakzang!" Thus spake he, and burst from the sack through the air.

Ssidi's fourth relation treats of the Magician with the head of the Swine.

Project Gutenberg's **Folk-Lore and Legends: Oriental**, by Charles John Tibbitts



## THE LAY OF SIR LAUNFAL

I will tell you the story of another Lay. It relates the adventures of a rich and mighty baron, and the Breton calls it, the Lay of Sir Launfal.

King Arthur--that fearless knight and courteous lord--removed to Wales, and lodged at Caerleon-on-Usk, since the Picts and Scots did much mischief in the land. For it was the wont of the wild people of the north to enter in the realm of Logres, and burn and damage at their will. At the time of Pentecost, the King cried a great feast. Thereat he gave many rich gifts to his counts and barons, and to the Knights of the Round Table. Never were such worship and bounty shown before at any feast, for Arthur bestowed honours and lands on all his servants--save only on one. This lord, who was forgotten and disliked of the King, was named Launfal. He was beloved by many of the Court, because of his beauty and prowess, for he was a worthy knight, open of heart and heavy of hand. These lords, to whom their comrade was dear, felt little joy to see so stout a knight misprized. Sir Launfal was son to a King of high descent, though his heritage was in a distant land. He was of the King's household, but since Arthur gave him



naught, and he was of too proud a mind to pray for his due, he had spent all that he had. Right heavy was Sir Launfal, when he considered these things, for he knew himself taken in the toils. Gentles, marvel not overmuch hereat. Ever must the pilgrim go heavily in a strange land, where there is none to counsel and direct him in the path.

Now, on a day, Sir Launfal got him on his horse, that he might take his pleasure for a little. He came forth from the city, alone, attended by neither servant nor squire. He went his way through a green mead, till he stood by a river of clear running water. Sir Launfal would have crossed this stream, without thought of pass or ford, but he might not do so, for reason that his horse was all fearful and trembling. Seeing that he was hindered in this fashion, Launfal unbitted his steed, and let him pasture in that fair meadow, where they had come. Then he folded his cloak to serve him as a pillow, and lay upon the ground. Launfal lay in great misease, because of his heavy thoughts, and the discomfort of his bed. He turned from side to side, and might not sleep. Now as the knight looked towards the river he saw two damsels coming towards him; fairer maidens Launfal had never seen. These two maidens were richly dressed in kirtles closely laced and shapen to their persons and wore mantles of a goodly purple hue. Sweet and dainty were the damsels, alike in raiment and in face. The elder of these ladies carried in her hands a basin of pure gold, cunningly wrought by some crafty smith--very fair and precious was the cup; and the younger bore a towel of soft white linen. These maidens turned neither to the right hand nor to the left, but went directly to the place where Launfal lay. When Launfal saw that their business was with him, he stood upon his feet, like a discreet and courteous gentleman. After they had greeted the knight, one of the maidens delivered the message with which she was charged.

"Sir Launfal, my demoiselle, as gracious as she is fair, prays that you will follow us, her messengers, as she has a certain word to speak with you. We will lead you swiftly to her pavilion, for our lady is very near at hand. If you but lift your eyes you may see where her tent is spread."

Right glad was the knight to do the bidding of the maidens. He gave no heed to his horse, but left him at his provand in the meadow. All his desire was to go with the damsels, to that pavilion of silk and divers colours, pitched in so fair a place. Certainly neither Semiramis in

the days of her most wanton power, nor Octavian, the Emperor of all the West, had so gracious a covering from sun and rain. Above the tent was set an eagle of gold, so rich and precious, that none might count the cost. The cords and fringes thereof were of silken thread, and the lances which bore aloft the pavilion were of refined gold. No King on earth might have so sweet a shelter, not though he gave in fee the value of his realm. Within this pavilion Launfal came upon the Maiden. Whiter she was than any altar lily, and more sweetly flushed than the new born rose in time of summer heat. She lay upon a bed with napery and coverlet of richer worth than could be furnished by a castle's spoil. Very fresh and slender showed the lady in her vesture of spotless linen. About her person she had drawn a mantle of ermine, edged with purple dye from the vats of Alexandria. By reason of the heat her raiment was unfastened for a little, and her throat and the rondure of her bosom showed whiter and more untouched than hawthorn in May. The knight came before the bed, and stood gazing on so sweet a sight. The Maiden beckoned him to draw near, and when he had seated himself at the foot of her couch, spoke her mind.

"Launfal," she said, "fair friend, it is for you that I have come from my own far land. I bring you my love. If you are prudent and discreet, as you are goodly to the view, there is no emperor nor count, nor king, whose day shall be so filled with riches and with mirth as yours."

When Launfal heard these words he rejoiced greatly, for his heart was litten by another's torch.

"Fair lady," he answered, "since it pleases you to be so gracious, and to dower so graceless a knight with your love, there is naught that you may bid me do--right or wrong, evil or good--that I will not do to the utmost of my power. I will observe your commandment, and serve in your quarrels. For you I renounce my father and my father's house. This only I pray, that I may dwell with you in your lodging, and that you will never send me from your side."

When the Maiden heard the words of him whom so fondly she desired to love, she was altogether moved, and granted him forthwith her heart and her tenderness. To her bounty she added another gift besides. Never might Launfal be desirous of aught, but he would have according to his wish. He might waste and spend at will and pleasure, but in his

purse ever there was to spare. No more was Launfal sad. Right merry was the pilgrim, since one had set him on the way, with such a gift, that the more pennies he bestowed, the more silver and gold were in his pouch.

But the Maiden had yet a word to say.

"Friend," she said, "hearken to my counsel. I lay this charge upon you, and pray you urgently, that you tell not to any man the secret of our love. If you show this matter, you will lose your friend, for ever and a day. Never again may you see my face. Never again will you have seisin of that body, which is now so tender in your eyes."

Launfal plighted faith, that right strictly he would observe this commandment. So the Maiden granted him her kiss and her embrace, and very sweetly in that fair lodging passed the day till evensong was come.

Right loath was Launfal to depart from the pavilion at the vesper hour, and gladly would he have stayed, had he been able, and his lady wished.

"Fair friend," said she, "rise up, for no longer may you tarry. The hour is come that we must part. But one thing I have to say before you go. When you would speak with me I shall hasten to come before your wish. Well I deem that you will only call your friend where she may be found without reproach or shame of men. You may see me at your pleasure; my voice shall speak softly in your ear at will; but I must never be known of your comrades, nor must they ever learn my speech."

Right joyous was Launfal to hear this thing. He sealed the covenant with a kiss, and stood upon his feet. Then there entered the two maidens who had led him to the pavilion, bringing with them rich raiment, fitting for a knight's apparel. When Launfal had clothed himself therewith, there seemed no goodlier varlet under heaven, for certainly he was fair and true. After these maidens had refreshed him with clear water, and dried his hands upon the napkin, Launfal went to meat. His friend sat at table with him, and small will had he to refuse her courtesy. Very serviceably the damsels bore the meats, and Launfal and the Maiden ate and drank with mirth and content. But one dish was more to the knight's relish than any other. Sweeter than the

dainties within his mouth, was the lady's kiss upon his lips.

When supper was ended, Launfal rose from table, for his horse stood waiting without the pavilion. The destrier was newly saddled and bridled, and showed proudly in his rich gay trappings. So Launfal kissed, and bade farewell, and went his way. He rode back towards the city at a slow pace. Often he checked his steed, and looked behind him, for he was filled with amazement, and all bemused concerning this adventure. In his heart he doubted that it was but a dream. He was altogether astonished, and knew not what to do. He feared that pavilion and Maiden alike were from the realm of faery.

Launfal returned to his lodging, and was greeted by servitors, clad no longer in ragged raiment. He fared richly, lay softly, and spent largely, but never knew how his purse was filled. There was no lord who had need of a lodging in the town, but Launfal brought him to his hall, for refreshment and delight. Launfal bestowed rich gifts. Launfal redeemed the poor captive. Launfal clothed in scarlet the minstrel. Launfal gave honour where honour was due. Stranger and friend alike he comforted at need. So, whether by night or by day, Launfal lived greatly at his ease. His lady, she came at will and pleasure, and, for the rest, all was added unto him.

Now it chanced, the same year, about the feast of St. John, a company of knights came, for their solace, to an orchard, beneath that tower where dwelt the Queen. Together with these lords went Gawain and his cousin, Yvain the fair. Then said Gawain, that goodly knight, beloved and dear to all,

"Lords, we do wrong to disport ourselves in this pleasaunce without our comrade Launfal. It is not well to slight a prince as brave as he is courteous, and of a lineage prouder than our own."

Then certain of the lords returned to the city, and finding Launfal within his hostel, entreated him to take his pastime with them in that fair meadow. The Queen looked out from a window in her tower, she and three ladies of her fellowship. They saw the lords at their pleasure, and Launfal also, whom well they knew. So the Queen chose of her Court thirty damsels--the sweetest of face and most dainty of fashion--and commanded that they should descend with her to take their delight in the garden. When the knights beheld this gay company of ladies come

down the steps of the perron, they rejoiced beyond measure. They hastened before to lead them by the hand, and said such words in their ear as were seemly and pleasant to be spoken. Amongst these merry and courteous lords hasted not Sir Launfal. He drew apart from the throng, for with him time went heavily, till he might have clasp and greeting of his friend. The ladies of the Queen's fellowship seemed but kitchen wenches to his sight, in comparison with the loveliness of the maiden. When the Queen marked Launfal go aside, she went his way, and seating herself upon the herb, called the knight before her. Then she opened out her heart.

"Launfal, I have honoured you for long as a worthy knight, and have praised and cherished you very dearly. You may receive a queen's whole love, if such be your care. Be content: he to whom my heart is given, has small reason to complain him of the alms."

"Lady," answered the knight, "grant me leave to go, for this grace is not for me. I am the King's man, and dare not break my troth. Not for the highest lady in the world, not even for her love, will I set this reproach upon my lord."

When the Queen heard this, she was full of wrath, and spoke many hot and bitter words.

"Launfal," she cried, "well I know that you think little of woman and her love. There are sins more black than a man may have upon his soul. Traitor you are, and false. Right evil counsel gave they to my lord, who prayed him to suffer you about his person. You remain only for his harm and loss."

Launfal was very dolent to hear this thing. He was not slow to take up the Queen's glove, and in his haste spake words that he repented long, and with tears.

"Lady," said he, "I am not of that guild of which you speak. Neither am I a despiser of woman, since I love, and am loved, of one who would bear the prize from all the ladies in the land. Dame, know now and be persuaded, that she, whom I serve, is so rich in state, that the very meanest of her maidens, excels you, Lady Queen, as much in clerkly skill and goodness, as in sweetness of body and face, and in every virtue."

The Queen rose straightway to her feet, and fled to her chamber, weeping. Right wrathful and heavy was she, because of the words that had besmirched her. She lay sick upon her bed, from which, she said, she would never rise, till the King had done her justice, and righted this bitter wrong. Now the King that day had taken his pleasure within the woods. He returned from the chase towards evening, and sought the chamber of the Queen. When the lady saw him, she sprang from her bed, and kneeling at his feet, pleaded for grace and pity. Launfal--she said--had shamed her, since he required her love. When she had put him by, very foully had he reviled her, boasting that his love was already set on a lady, so proud and noble, that her meanest wench went more richly, and smiled more sweetly, than the Queen. Thereat the King waxed marvellously wrathful, and swore a great oath that he would set Launfal within a fire, or hang him from a tree, if he could not deny this thing, before his peers.

Arthur came forth from the Queen's chamber, and called to him three of his lords. These he sent to seek the knight who so evilly had entreated the Queen. Launfal, for his part, had returned to his lodging, in a sad and sorrowful case. He saw very clearly that he had lost his friend, since he had declared their love to men. Launfal sat within his chamber, sick and heavy of thought. Often he called upon his friend, but the lady would not hear his voice. He bewailed his evil lot, with tears; for grief he came nigh to swoon; a hundred times he implored the Maiden that she would deign to speak with her knight. Then, since the lady yet refrained from speech, Launfal cursed his hot and unruly tongue. Very near he came to ending all this trouble with his knife. Naught he found to do but to wring his hands, and call upon the Maiden, begging her to forgive his trespass, and to talk with him again, as friend to friend.

But little peace is there for him who is harassed by a King. There came presently to Launfal's hostel those three barons from the Court. These bade the knight forthwith to go with them to Arthur's presence, to acquit him of this wrong against the Queen. Launfal went forth, to his own deep sorrow. Had any man slain him on the road, he would have counted him his friend. He stood before the King, downcast and speechless, being dumb by reason of that great grief, of which he showed the picture and image.

Arthur looked upon his captive very evilly.

"Vassal," said he, harshly, "you have done me a bitter wrong. It was a foul deed to seek to shame me in this ugly fashion, and to smirch the honour of the Queen. Is it folly or lightness which leads you to boast of that lady, the least of whose maidens is fairer, and goes more richly, than the Queen?"

Launfal protested that never had he set such shame upon his lord. Word by word he told the tale of how he denied the Queen, within the orchard. But concerning that which he had spoken of the lady, he owned the truth, and his folly. The love of which he bragged was now lost to him, by his own exceeding fault. He cared little for his life, and was content to obey the judgment of the Court.

Right wrathful was the King at Launfal's words. He conjured his barons to give him such wise counsel herein, that wrong might be done to none. The lords did the King's bidding, whether good came of the matter, or evil. They gathered themselves together, and appointed a certain day that Launfal should abide the judgment of his peers. For his part Launfal must give pledge and surety to his lord, that he would come before this judgment in his own body. If he might not give such surety then he should be held captive till the appointed day. When the lords of the King's household returned to tell him of their counsel, Arthur demanded that Launfal should put such pledge in his hand, as they had said. Launfal was altogether mazed and bewildered at this judgment, for he had neither friend nor kindred in the land. He would have been set in prison, but Gawain came first to offer himself as his surety, and with him, all the knights of his fellowship. These gave into the King's hand as pledge, the fiefs and lands that they held of his Crown. The King having taken pledges from the sureties, Launfal returned to his lodging, and with him certain knights of his company. They blamed him greatly because of his foolish love, and chastened him grievously by reason of the sorrow he made before men. Every day they came to his chamber, to know of his meat and drink, for much they feared that presently he would become mad.

The lords of the household came together on the day appointed for this judgment. The King was on his chair, with the Queen sitting at his side. The sureties brought Launfal within the hall, and rendered him into the hands of his peers. Right sorrowful were they because of his

plight. A great company of his fellowship did all that they were able to acquit him of this charge. When all was set out, the King demanded the judgment of the Court, according to the accusation and the answer. The barons went forth in much trouble and thought to consider this matter. Many amongst them grieved for the peril of a good knight in a strange land; others held that it were well for Launfal to suffer, because of the wish and malice of their lord. Whilst they were thus perplexed, the Duke of Cornwall rose in the council, and said,

"Lords, the King pursues Launfal as a traitor, and would slay him with the sword, by reason that he bragged of the beauty of his maiden, and roused the jealousy of the Queen. By the faith that I owe this company, none complains of Launfal, save only the King. For our part we would know the truth of this business, and do justice between the King and his man. We would also show proper reverence to our own liege lord. Now, if it be according to Arthur's will, let us take oath of Launfal, that he seek this lady, who has put such strife between him and the Queen. If her beauty be such as he has told us, the Queen will have no cause for wrath. She must pardon Launfal for his rudeness, since it will be plain that he did not speak out of a malicious heart. Should Launfal fail his word, and not return with the lady, or should her fairness fall beneath his boast, then let him be cast off from our fellowship, and be sent forth from the service of the King."

This counsel seemed good to the lords of the household. They sent certain of his friends to Launfal, to acquaint him with their judgment, bidding him to pray his damsel to the Court, that he might be acquitted of this blame. The knight made answer that in no wise could he do this thing. So the sureties returned before the judges, saying that Launfal hoped neither for refuge nor for succour from the lady, and Arthur urged them to a speedy ending, because of the prompting of the Queen.

The judges were about to give sentence upon Launfal, when they saw two maidens come riding towards the palace, upon two white ambling palfreys. Very sweet and dainty were these maidens, and richly clothed in garments of crimson sendal, closely girt and fashioned to their bodies. All men, old and young, looked willingly upon them, for fair they were to see. Gawain, and three knights of his company, went straight to Launfal, and showed him these maidens, praying him to say which of them was his friend. But he answered never a word. The



maidens dismounted from their palfreys, and coming before the dais where the King was seated, spake him fairly, as they were fair.

"Sire, prepare now a chamber, hung with silken cloths, where it is seemly for my lady to dwell; for she would lodge with you awhile."

This gift the King granted gladly. He called to him two knights of his household, and bade them bestow the maidens in such chambers as were fitting to their degree. The maidens being gone, the King required of his barons to proceed with their judgment, saying that he had sore displeasure at the slowness of the cause.

"Sire," replied the barons, "we rose from Council, because of the damsels who entered in the hall. We will at once resume the sitting, and give our judgment without more delay."

The barons again were gathered together, in much thought and trouble, to consider this matter. There was great strife and dissension amongst them, for they knew not what to do. In the midst of all this noise and tumult, there came two other damsels riding to the hall on two Spanish mules. Very richly arrayed were these damsels in raiment of fine needlework, and their kirtles were covered by fresh fair mantles, embroidered with gold. Great joy had Launfal's comrades when they marked these ladies. They said between themselves that doubtless they came for the succour of the good knight. Gawain, and certain of his company, made haste to Launfal, and said, "Sir, be not cast down. Two ladies are near at hand, right dainty of dress, and gracious of person. Tell us truly, for the love of God, is one of these your friend?"

But Launfal answered very simply that never before had he seen these damsels with his eyes, nor known and loved them in his heart.

The maidens dismounted from their mules, and stood before Arthur, in the sight of all. Greatly were they praised of many, because of their beauty, and of the colour of their face and hair. Some there were who deemed already that the Queen was overborne.

The elder of the damsels carried herself modestly and well, and sweetly told over the message wherewith she was charged.

"Sire, make ready for us chambers, where we may abide with our lady, for even now she comes to speak with thee."

The King commanded that the ladies should be led to their companions, and bestowed in the same honourable fashion as they. Then he bade the lords of his household to consider their judgment, since he would endure no further respite. The Court already had given too much time to the business, and the Queen was growing wrathful, because of the blame that was hers. Now the judges were about to proclaim their sentence, when, amidst the tumult of the town, there came riding to the palace the flower of all the ladies of the world. She came mounted upon a palfrey, white as snow, which carried her softly, as though she loved her burthen. Beneath the sky was no goodlier steed, nor one more gentle to the hand. The harness of the palfrey was so rich, that no king on earth might hope to buy trappings so precious, unless he sold or set his realm in pledge. The Maiden herself showed such as I will tell you. Passing slim was the lady, sweet of bodice and slender of girdle. Her throat was whiter than snow on branch, and her eyes were like flowers in the pallor of her face. She had a witching mouth, a dainty nose, and an open brow. Her eyebrows were brown, and her golden hair parted in two soft waves upon her head. She was clad in a shift of spotless linen, and above her snowy kirtle was set a mantle of royal purple, clasped upon her breast. She carried a hooded falcon upon her glove, and a greyhound followed closely after. As the Maiden rode at a slow pace through the streets of the city, there was none, neither great nor small, youth nor sergeant, but ran forth from his house, that he might content his heart with so great beauty. Every man that saw her with his eyes, marvelled at a fairness beyond that of any earthly woman. Little he cared for any mortal maiden, after he had seen this sight. The friends of Sir Launfal hastened to the knight, to tell him of his lady's succour, if so it were according to God's will.

"Sir comrade, truly is not this your friend? This lady is neither black nor golden, mean nor tall. She is only the most lovely thing in all the world."

When Launfal heard this, he sighed, for by their words he knew again his friend. He raised his head, and as the blood rushed to his face, speech flowed from his lips.

"By my faith," cried he, "yes, she is indeed my friend. It is a small

matter now whether men slay me, or set me free; for I am made whole of my hurt just by looking on her face."

The Maiden entered in the palace--where none so fair had come before--and stood before the King, in the presence of his household. She loosed the clasp of her mantle, so that men might the more easily perceive the grace of her person. The courteous King advanced to meet her, and all the Court got them on their feet, and pained themselves in her service. When the lords had gazed upon her for a space, and praised the sum of her beauty, the lady spake to Arthur in this fashion, for she was anxious to begone.

"Sire, I have loved one of thy vassals,--the knight who stands in bonds, Sir Launfal. He was always misprized in thy Court, and his every action turned to blame. What he said, that thou knowest; for over hasty was his tongue before the Queen. But he never craved her in love, however loud his boasting. I cannot choose that he should come to hurt or harm by me. In the hope of freeing Launfal from his bonds, I have obeyed thy summons. Let now thy barons look boldly upon my face, and deal justly in this quarrel between the Queen and me."

The King commanded that this should be done, and looking upon her eyes, not one of the judges but was persuaded that her favour exceeded that of the Queen.

Since then Launfal had not spoken in malice against his lady, the lords of the household gave him again his sword. When the trial had come thus to an end the Maiden took her leave of the King, and made her ready to depart. Gladly would Arthur have had her lodge with him for a little, and many a lord would have rejoiced in her service, but she might not tarry. Now without the hall stood a great stone of dull marble, where it was the wont of lords, departing from the Court, to climb into the saddle, and Launfal by the stone. The Maiden came forth from the doors of the palace, and mounting on the stone, seated herself on the palfrey, behind her friend. Then they rode across the plain together, and were no more seen.

The Bretons tell that the knight was ravished by his lady to an island, very dim and very fair, known as Avalon. But none has had speech with Launfal and his faery love since then, and for my part I can tell you no more of the matter.

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## FOLLOWERS OF THE SUN

There were once four brothers, who as soon as they noticed that the sun rose in one quarter and set in another, made up their minds to follow on to the place of his setting. They were very young when they set out toward the west, and as the years passed they grew to be tall youths, then strong men in their prime, yet they could never overtake the Sun.

Old age had begun to creep upon the travelers when at last they reached the shores of the Everywhere Salt Water (the ocean). Behind its shining rim the golden ball descended, and they were given power to follow, and where sky and water met to reach their journey's end.

"Why are you here who have not yet died?" asked the Sun.

"We have done nothing but follow you all our lives," replied the brothers.

"Only the dead come here," the Sun insisted. "You will have to go back."

He sent them each home on the wings of a buzzard, and thus returned to their amazed people four feeble old men, who had been where no mortal ever went before. When they had told all their strange story, they lay down and died, and so returned to the glories of heaven, which they alone of all men had seen before their time.

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## THE WIND IN THE PINE TREE

It was a Deity from High Heaven that planted the Pine Tree.

So long ago that the crane cannot remember it, and the tortoise knows it only by hearsay from his great-grandmother, the heavenly deity descended. Lightly, lightly he came by way of the Floating Bridge, bearing the tree in his right hand. Lightly, lightly his feet touched the earth.

He said, "I have come to the Land of the Reed Plains. I have come to the Land of Fresh Rice Ears. It is a good land; I am satisfied." And he planted the Pine Tree within the sound of the sea at Takasaga, which is in the Province of Harima. Then he went up again to High Heaven by way of the Floating Bridge.

But the Pine Tree flourished. So great it grew, there was not a greater in all the Land of the Reed Plains. Its trunk was rosy red, and beneath it spread a brown carpet of fallen needles.

In the sweet nights of summer the Children of the Woods came hand in hand to the Pine Tree by moonlight, slipping their slim dark feet upon the moss, and tossing back their long green hair.

The Children of the Water came by moonlight, all drenching wet their sleeves, and the bright drops fell from their finger-tips. The Children of the Air rested in the Pine Tree's branches, and made murmuring music all the live-long night. The Children of the Sea Foam crept up the yellow sands; and from the confines of Yomi came the Mysteries, the Sounds and the Scents of the Dark--with faces veiled and thin grey forms, they came, and they hung upon the air about the place where the Pine Tree was, so that the place was holy and haunted.

Lovers wandering upon the beach at Takasaga would hear the great company of Spirits singing together.

“Joy of my heart,” they said to one another, “do you hear the wind in the Pine Tree?”

Poor souls lying sick a-bed would listen, and fishermen far out at sea would pause in their labour to whisper, “The wind, the wind in the Pine Tree! How the sound carries over the water!”

As for the coming of the Maiden, the crane cannot remember it, but the tortoise has it of his great-grandmother that she was born of poor parents in Takasaga. The Maiden was brown and tall and slender; in face and form most lovely. Her hair hung down to her knees. She rose at dawn to help her mother; she found sticks for the fire, she drew water at the well. She could spin and weave with the best; and for long, long hours she sat and plied her wheel or her shuttle in the shade of the great Pine Tree, whilst her ears heard the sound of the wind in its branches. Sometimes her eyes looked out over the paths of the sea, as one who waits and watches. She was calm, not restless, more grave than gay, though she smiled not seldom. Her voice was the voice of a Heavenly Being.

Now concerning the Youth from the far province, of him the crane knows something, for the crane is a great traveller. She was flying over the streams and the valleys of the far province, so she says, when she saw the Youth at work in the green rice-fields. The crane lingered, circling slowly in the bright air. The Youth stood up. He looked round upon the valleys and streams; he looked into the sky.

“I hear the call,” he said. “I may tarry no longer. Voice in my heart, I hear and I obey.”

With that he left the rice-field, and bade farewell to his mother and his father and his sisters and his brothers and his friends. All together, they came down to the seashore, weeping and clinging to each other. The Youth took a boat and went away to sea, and the rest of them stood upon the beach.

On sped the boat for many a day over the unknown paths of the sea. And

the white crane flew behind the boat. And when the wind failed, she pushed the boat forward with the wind of her strong wings.

At last, one evening about the hour of sunset, the Youth heard the sound of sweet singing. The sound came to him from the land, and it travelled over the paths of the sea. He stood up in his boat, and the crane beat her strong white wings and guided his boat to the shore till its keel touched the yellow sand of the sea-beach of Takasaga.

When the Youth had come ashore he pushed the boat out again with the waves, and watched it drift away. Then he turned his face inland. The sound of music was still in his ears. The voice was like the voice of a Heavenly Being, and strange and mystical were the words of the song:--

“The lover brought a love gift to his mistress,  
Jewels of jade upon a silken string;  
Well-carved jewels,  
Well-rounded jewels,  
Green as the grass,  
Upon a silken string.  
The jewels know not one another,  
The string they know,  
Oh, the strength of the silken string!”

The Youth went inland and came to the great Pine Tree and to the Maid that sat beneath, weaving diligently and singing. The crane came flying with her strong white wings, and perched upon the Tree’s topmost branches. The tortoise lay below on the brown carpet of needles. He watched and saw much with his little eyes, but he said nothing, being very silent by nature.

The Youth stood before the Maiden, waiting.

“Whence come you?” she said, lifting up her eyes.

“I have come across the sea path. I have come from afar.”

“And wherefore came you?”

“That you must know best, seeing it was your voice that sang in my heart.”

“Do you bring me the gift?” she said.

“Indeed, I bring you the complete gift, jewels of jade upon a silken string.”

“Come,” she said, and rose and took him by the hand. And they went to her father’s house.

So they drank the “Three Times Three,” and were made man and wife, and lived in sweet tranquillity many, many years.

All the time the crane dwelt in the Pine Tree’s topmost branches, and the tortoise on the brown carpet of needles below.

At last the Youth and Maiden, that once were, became white-haired, old, and withered, by the swift, relentless passage of years.

“Fair love,” said the old man, “how weary I grow! It is sad to be old.”

“Say not so, dear delight of my heart,” said the old woman; “say not so, the best of all is to come.”

“My dear,” said the old man, “I have a desire to see the great Pine Tree before I die, and to listen once more to the song of the wind in its branches.”

“Come, then,” she said, and rose and took him by the hand.

Old and faint and worn, with feeble, tottering steps, and hand in hand they came.

“How faint I grow,” said the old man. “Ah, I am afraid! How dark it is! Hold you my hand....”

“I have it fast in mine. There, lie down, lie down, dear love; be still and listen to the wind in the Pine Tree.”

He lay on the soft brown bed beneath the Pine Tree’s boughs; and the wind sang.



She who was his love and his wife bent over him and sheltered him. And he suffered the great change.

Then he opened his eyes and looked at her. She was tall and straight and slender, in face and form most lovely, and each of them was young as the gods are young. He put out his hand and touched her. "Your long black hair ..." he said.

Once more she bade him, "Come." Lightly they left the ground. To the sound of the wind's music they swayed, they floated, they rose into the air. Higher they rose and higher. The branches of the Pine Tree received them, and they were no more seen.

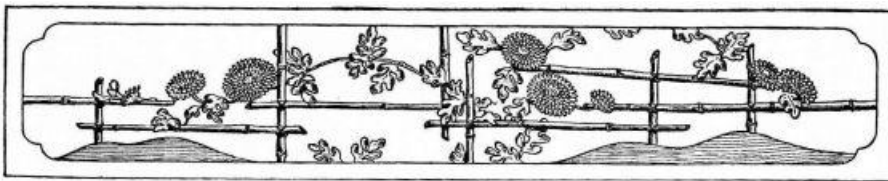
Still, in the sweet nights of summer, the Children of the Woods come hand in hand to the Pine Tree by moonlight, slipping their slim dark feet upon the moss, and tossing back their long green hair.

The Children of the Water come by moonlight, all drenching wet their sleeves, and the bright drops fall from their finger-tips. The Children of the Air rest in the Pine Tree's branches, and make murmuring music all the live-long night. The Children of the Sea Foam creep up the yellow sands; and from the confines of Yomi come the Mysteries, the Sounds and the Scents of the Dark--with faces veiled and thin grey forms, they come, and they hang upon the air about the place where the Pine Tree is, so that the place is holy and haunted.

Lovers wandering upon the beach at Takasaga hear the great company of Spirits singing together.

"Joy of my heart," they say to one another, "do you hear the wind in the Pine Tree?"

from: The Project Gutenberg eBook, **Japanese Fairy Tales**, by Grace James



## THE HOME OF THE FAIRIES

In the days of King In-jo (1623-1649) there was a student of Confucius who lived in Ka-pyong. He was still a young man and unmarried. His education had not been extensive, for he had read only a little in the way of history and literature. For some reason or other he left his home and went into Kang-won Province. Travelling on horseback, and with a servant, he reached a mountain, where he was overtaken by rain that wet him through. Mysteriously, from some unknown cause, his servant suddenly died, and the man, in fear and distress, drew the body to the side of the hill, where he left it and went on his way weeping. When he had gone but a short distance, the horse he rode fell under him and died also. Such was his plight: his servant dead, his horse dead, rain falling fast, and the road an unknown one. He did not know what to do or where to go, and reduced thus to walking, he broke down and cried. At this point there met him an old man with very wonderful eyes, and hair as white as snow. He asked the young man why he wept, and the reply was that his servant was dead, his horse was dead, that it was raining, and that he did not know the way. The patriarch, on hearing this, took pity on him, and lifting his staff, pointed, saying, "There is a house yonder, just beyond those pines, follow that stream and it will bring you to where there are people."

The young man looked as directed, and a li or so beyond he saw a clump of trees. He bowed, thanked the stranger, and started on his way. When he had gone a few paces he looked back, but the friend had disappeared. Greatly wondering, he went on toward the place indicated, and as he drew near he saw a grove of pines, huge trees they were, a whole forest of them. Bamboos appeared, too, in countless numbers, with a wide stream of water flowing by. Underneath the water there seemed to be a marble flooring like a great pavement, white and pure. As he went along he saw that the water was all of an even depth, such as one could cross easily. A mile or so farther on he saw a beautifully decorated house. The pillars and entrance approaches were perfect in form. He continued his way, wet as he was, carrying his thorn staff, and entered the gate and sat down to rest. It was paved, too, with marble, and smooth as polished glass. There were no chinks or creases in it, all was of one perfect surface. In the room was a marble table, and on it a copy of the Book of Changes; there was also a brazier of jade just in front. Incense was burning in it, and the fragrance

filled the room. Beside these, nothing else was visible. The rain had ceased and all was quiet and clear, with no wind nor anything to disturb. The world of confusion seemed to have receded from him.

While he sat there, looking in astonishment, he suddenly heard the sound of footfalls from the rear of the building. Startled by it, he turned to see, when an old man appeared. He looked as though he might equal the turtle or the crane as to age, and was very dignified. He wore a green dress and carried a jade staff of nine sections. The appearance of the old man was such as to stun any inhabitant of the earth. He recognized him as the master of the place, and so he went forward and made a low obeisance.

The old man received him kindly, and said, "I am the master and have long waited for you." He took him by the hand and led him away. As they went along, the hills grew more and more enchanting, while the soft breezes and the light touched him with mystifying favour. Suddenly, as he looked the man was gone, so he went on by himself, and arrived soon at another palace built likewise of precious stones. It was a great hall, stretching on into the distance as far as the eye could see.

The young man had seen the Royal Palace frequently when in Seoul attending examinations, but compared with this, the Royal Palace was as a mud hut thatched with straw.

As he reached the gate a man in ceremonial robes received him and led him in. He passed two or three pavilions, and at last reached a special one and went up to the upper storey. There, reclining at a table, he saw the ancient sage whom he had met before. Again he bowed.

This young man, brought up poorly in the country, was never accustomed to seeing or dealing with the great. In fear, he did not dare to lift his eyes. The ancient master, however, again welcomed him and asked him to be seated, saying, "This is not the dusty world that you are accustomed to, but the abode of the genii. I knew you were coming, and so was waiting to receive you." He turned and called, saying, "Bring something for the guest to eat."

In a little a servant brought a richly laden table. It was such fare as was never seen on earth, and there was abundance of it. The young man, hungry as he was, ate heartily of these strange viands. Then the

dishes were carried away and the old man said, "I have a daughter who has arrived at a marriageable age, and I have been trying to find a son-in-law, but as yet have not succeeded. Your coming accords with this need. Live here, then, and become my son-in-law." The young man, not knowing what to think, bowed and was silent. Then the host turned and gave an order, saying, "Call in the children."

Two boys about twelve or thirteen years of age came running in and sat down beside him. Their faces were so beautifully white they seemed like jewels. The master pointed to them and said to the guest, "These are my sons," and to the sons he said, "This young man is he whom I have chosen for my son-in-law; when should we have the wedding? Choose you a lucky day and let me know."

The two boys reckoned over the days on their fingers, and then together said, "The day after to-morrow is a lucky day."

The old man, turning to the stranger, said, "That decides as to the wedding, and now you must wait in the guest-chamber till the time arrives." He then gave a command to call So and So. In a little an official of the genii came forward, dressed in light and airy garments. His appearance and expression were very beautiful, a man, he seemed, of glad and happy mien.

The master said, "Show this young man the way to his apartments and treat him well till the time of the wedding."

The official then led the way, and the young man bowed as he left the room. When he had passed outside the gate, a red sedan chair was in waiting for him. He was asked to mount. Eight bearers bore him smoothly along. A mile or so distant they reached another palace, equally wonderful, with no speck or flaw of any kind to mar its beauty. In graceful groves of flowers and trees he descended to enter his pavilion. Beautiful garments were taken from jewelled boxes, and a perfumed bath was given him and a change made. Thus he laid aside his weather-beaten clothes and donned the vestments of the genii. The official remained as company for him till the appointed time.

When that day arrived other beautiful robes were brought, and again he bathed and changed. When he was dressed, he mounted the palanquin and rode to the Palace of the master, twenty or more

officials accompanying. On arrival, a guide directed them to the special Palace Beautiful. Here he saw preparations for the wedding, and here he made his bow. This finished he moved as directed, further in. The tinkling sound of jade bells and the breath of sweet perfumes filled the air. Thus he made his entry into the inner quarters.

Many beautiful women were in waiting, all gorgeously apparelled, like the women of the gods. Among these he imagined that he would meet the master's daughter. In a little, accompanied by a host of others, she came, shining in jewels and beautiful clothing so that she lighted up the Palace. He took his stand before her, though her face was hidden from him by a fan of pearls. When he saw her at last, so beautiful was she that his eyes were dazzled. The other women, compared with her, were as the magpie to the phoenix. So bewildered was he that he dared not look up. The friend accompanying assisted him to bow and to go through the necessary forms. The ceremony was much the same as that observed among men. When it was over the young man went back to his bridegroom's chamber. There the embroidered curtains, the golden screens, the silken clothing, the jewelled floor, were such as no men of earth ever see.

On the second day his mother-in-law called him to her. Her age would be about thirty, and her face was like a freshly-blown lotus flower. Here a great feast was spread, with many guests invited. The accompaniments thereof in the way of music were sweeter than mortals ever dreamed of. When the feast was over, the women caught up their skirts, and, lifting their sleeves, danced together and sang in sweet accord. The sound of their singing caused even the clouds to stop and listen. When the day was over, and all had well dined, the feast broke up.

A young man, brought up in a country hut, had all of a sudden met the chief of the genii, and had become a sharer in his glory and the accompaniments of his life. His mind was dazed and his thoughts overcame him. Doubts were mixed with fears. He knew not what to do.

A sharer in the joys of the fairies he had actually become, and a year or so passed in such delight as no words can ever describe.

One day his wife said to him, "Would you like to enter into the inner enclosure and see as the fairies see?"

He replied, "Gladly would I."

She then led him into a special park where there were lovely walks, surrounded by green hills. As they advanced there were charming views, with springs of water and sparkling cascades. The scene grew gradually more entrancing, with jewelled flowers and scintillating spray, lovely birds and animals disporting themselves. A man once entering here would never again think of earth as a place to return to.

After seeing this he ascended the highest peak of all, which was like a tower of many stories. Before him lay a wide stretch of sea, with islands of the blessed standing out of the water, and long stretches of pleasant land in view. His wife showed them all to him, pointing out this and that. They seemed filled with golden palaces and surrounded with a halo of light. They were peopled with happy souls, some riding on cranes, some on the phoenix, some on the unicorn; some were sitting on the clouds, some sailing by on the wind, some walking on the air, some gliding gently up the streams, some descending from above, some ascending, some moving west, some north, some gathering in groups. Flutes and harps sounded sweetly. So many and so startling were the things seen that he could never tell the tale of them. After the day had passed they returned.

Thus was their joy unbroken, and when two years had gone by she bore him two sons.

Time moved on, when one day, unexpectedly, as he was seated with his wife, he began to cry and tears soiled his face. She asked in amazement for the cause of it. "I was thinking," said he, "of how a plain countryman living in poverty had thus become the son-in-law of the king of the genii. But in my home is my poor old mother, whom I have not seen for these years; I would so like to see her that my tears flow."

The wife laughed, and said, "Would you really like to see her? Then go, but do not cry." She told her father that her husband would like to go and see his mother. The master called him and gave his permission. The son thought, of course, that he would call many servants and send him in state, but not so. His wife gave him one little bundle and that was all, so he said good-bye to his father-in-law, whose parting word was, "Go now and see your mother, and in a little I shall call

for you again."

He sent with him one servant, and so he passed out through the main gateway. There he saw a poor thin horse with a worn rag of a saddle on his back. He looked carefully and found that they were the dead horse and the dead servant, whom he had lost, restored to him. He gave a start, and asked, "How did you come here?"

The servant answered, "I was coming with you on the road when some one caught me away and brought me here. I did not know the reason, but I have been here for a long time."

The man, in great fear, fastened on his bundle and started on his journey. The genie servant brought up the rear, but after a short distance the world of wonder had become transformed into the old weary world again. Here it was with its fogs, and thorn, and precipice. He looked off toward the world of the genii, and it was but a dream. So overcome was he by his feelings that he broke down and cried.

The genie servant said to him when he saw him weeping, "You have been for several years in the abode of the immortals, but you have not yet attained thereto, for you have not yet forgotten the seven things of earth: anger, sorrow, fear, ambition, hate and selfishness. If you once get rid of these there will be no tears for you." On hearing this he stopped his crying, wiped his cheeks, and asked pardon.

When he had gone a mile farther he found himself on the main road. The servant said to him, "You know the way from this point on, so I shall go back," and thus at last the young man reached his home.

He found there an exorcising ceremony in progress. Witches and spirit worshippers had been called and were saying their prayers. The family, seeing the young man come home thus, were all aghast. "It is his ghost," said they. However, they saw in a little that it was really he himself. The mother asked why he had not come home in all that time. She being a very violent woman in disposition, he did not dare to tell her the truth, so he made up something else. The day of his return was the anniversary of his supposed death, and so they had called the witches for a prayer ceremony. Here he opened the bundle that his wife had given him and found four suits of clothes, one for each season.

In about a year after his return home the mother, seeing him alone, made application for the daughter of one of the village literati. The man, being timid by nature and afraid of offending his mother, did not dare to refuse, and was therefore married; but there was no joy in it, and the two never looked at each other.

The young man had a friend whom he had known intimately from childhood. After his return the friend came to see him frequently, and they used to spend the nights talking together. In their talks the friend inquired why in all these years he had never come home. The young man then told him what had befallen him in the land of the genii, and how he had been there and had been married. The friend looked at him in wonder, for he seemed just as he had remembered him except in the matter of clothing. This he found on examination was of very strange material, neither grass cloth, silk nor cotton, but different from them all, and yet warm and comfortable. When spring came the spring clothes sufficed, when summer came those for summer, and for autumn and winter each special suit. They were never washed, and yet never became soiled; they never wore out, and always looked fresh and new. The friend was greatly astonished.

Some three years passed when one day there came once more a servant from the master of the genii, bringing his two sons. There were also letters, saying, "Next year the place where you dwell will be destroyed and all the people will become 'fish and meat' for the enemy, therefore follow this messenger and come, all of you."

He told his friend of this and showed him his two sons. The friend, when he saw these children that looked like silk and jade, confessed the matter to the mother also. She, too, gladly agreed, and so they sold out and had a great feast for all the people of the town, and then bade farewell. This was the year 1635. They left and were never heard of again.

The year following was the Manchu invasion, when the village where the young man had lived was all destroyed. To this day young and old in Ka-pyong tell this story.

Im Bang.





## HOW FIRE WAS SECURED

Beaver and Eagle lived with their sister in the Lillooet country. They had no fire at all, so they ate all their food raw. The sister cried and complained constantly because she had no fire at which to roast her dried salmon skins. At last the brothers said, "Don't cry any more. We will get fire for you. First we will need to train ourselves for a long time; but if you cry while we are training, we shall fail."

Beaver and Eagle went into the mountains and trained for four years. Then they knew where fire was, and they returned home and told their sister that they knew how to find it.

Now they started off. They traveled five days to the house of the people who owned the fire. Eagle drew over himself an eagle's body; and Beaver drew over himself a beaver's body.

Beaver at once went to work. He dammed the creek nearby and that night made a hole under that house. The next morning Beaver swam around in the pond of water made by the dam. An old man saw him and shot him. He took Beaver into the house and laid him beside the fire. He told the people to skin him. While they were skinning Beaver, they found a clam shell under his arm, which he had hidden there.

Just then the people saw a large eagle perched in a tree nearby. Quickly they wished for his feathers. At once they all ran out and began to shoot at him, but no one could hit him. And while they were

shooting, Beaver was left alone.

Then Beaver rose quickly and put fire in his clam shell. He dug into the hole he had made beneath the house, and raced away to the water. He swam away with the fire.

As soon as Eagle saw that Beaver was safe, he flew away. Then they returned home. They gave fire to their sister.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of **Myths and Legends of British North America**,  
by Katharine Berry Judson



## **THE APPLES OF LIFE.**

### Part I.

Among the gods in Asgard, dwelt the beautiful Idun, the goddess whose care it was to guard the apples of life.

"Idun," Odin had said as he gave into her hands the rosy apples, "to guard these apples and keep them forever from all harm, is to do a greater service for Asgard than even Thor, with his mighty thunders, or Baldur, with his warm light, can do; for these are the apples of everlasting youth. Without them, what would Asgard be more than the cities of Midgard or of Jotunheim? What would the gods be more than the mortals of Midgard or the giants of Jotunheim? So guard them well, beautiful Idun, for to them you owe your beauty, even as we owe to them our never fading youth."

One day, when all was quiet and peaceful and happy in the city of Asgard, Loke, feeling within him the stirring of his own evil heart, betook himself to Midgard in search of mischief. The peace and quiet

of Asgard he could no longer endure. Then, too, it was to him a cruel delight to shoot his arrows into the lives of the helpless children of Midgard and make them sad.

O, Loke was a cruel god! "Surely," Odin would sometimes say, as he looked upon him and thought of the wretchedness that yet would fall on Asgard through Loke's wicked deeds, "surely, Loke has the spirit of a Frost giant; and the Frost giants are bitter, bitter foes to Asgard."

This day Loke longed for mischief. "I will go down to Midgard and find some happy heart to sadden," said he, his eyes shining with their wicked light.

Down the rainbow bridge he hastened, and, with a light bound, sprang upon a bright tree in the beautiful land of Midgard.

"Who are you?" cried he, seeing in the tree beside him a great, white bird.

But the bird made no reply; he only winked, and blinked, and stared at Loke, and crooned, and pruned his feathers.

"Do you not know a god speaks to you?" stormed Loke, growing angry even with a bird.

Still no answer.

"Was ever there such a stupid bird? Indeed, like the people of Midgard, you seem to have no wisdom," sneered Loke. And determined to vent his evil mood, he seized a branch and began to beat the bird.

Then a strange thing happened. The bird, who all this time had seemed so stupid--too stupid even to fly away--now seized upon the bough and held it fast. Loke pulled and pulled with all his godlike strength. He could not move it; it was as if held in the grasp of a giant.

"Stupid bird!" sneered Loke, when he found he could do the bird no harm. "I will not stay in the tree with such a stupid creature."

A strange sound--almost like a laugh of triumph--squeezed itself out from the beak of the big bird.

"Go, Loke, go at once. Go back to Asgard; or perhaps you would like to go with me to Jotunheim," spoke the bird at last. And as he spoke, he spread his wings, and arose high in the air. Alas, alas for Loke, as the bird rose, he rose too; nor could he free himself. He screamed, he fought, he begged, he strove with all his godlike arts to free himself, but all in vain.

On, on they flew, the bird and Loke, across the sky, over and under and between the clouds, across the great wide sea, at last across the snow-white peaks, down, down to a castle in Jotunheim, in the land of the mighty Frost giants, the terrible, the dreaded enemies of the gods.

"Let me free! Let me free!" foamed Loke, struggling against the bird, whose magic held him fast.

"I will never let you free," answered the bird, throwing off his disguise and standing forth a giant foe; "I will never let you free except on one condition."

"I grant it! I grant it! Whatever it is, I grant it," cried the coward, caring for nothing but to free himself.

"The condition is this," continued the giant coolly: "I will let you free if you will bring me, without delay, the apples of everlasting youth--the apples that Idun guards and watches over, locked so closely in the golden casket in the city of Asgard."

Loke stared. He caught his breath. To give up the apples of life--the fruit by which the gods were kept forever young and strong and beautiful--that was too great a thing to ask even of Loke, evil as he was.

"There are no such apples," answered he, trying, as cowards always do, to hide himself behind a lie. "There are no such apples."

"Very well," answered the giant, opening a great dungeon door, and thrusting Loke in. "When you are ready to do what I say, you may come out; never until then." The great dungeon door creaked upon its terrible hinges and Loke was alone, a prisoner, at the mercy of the Frost giant.

Loke howled and beat against the walls of the dungeon.

"Are you ready to do what I asked of you?" asked the Frost giant, opening the great door the next morning.

"There are no such apples," cried Loke. "On my honor as a god, I swear it!"

The giant made no reply. The heavy door creaked again, and Loke was alone.

"Are you ready to do what I asked of you?" asked the Frost giant, opening the great door the second morning.

"Anything in all Asgard, O Giant, I promise you--anything but the apples," cried Loke.

The giant made no reply. The heavy door creaked again, and Loke was alone.

"Are you willing to do what I asked of you?" asked the Frost giant, opening the great door the third morning.

"One of the apples, O Giant, I might steal from Idun and escape with before the fruit was missed," Loke began.

The giant made no reply. The heavy door creaked again and Loke was alone.

"Are you ready to do what I asked of you?" asked the Frost giant, opening the great door the fourth morning.

"Yes, two of the three apples will I promise to bring you. With even one left, the gods might be content; for even then their lives would be far longer than the life of mortals."

The giant made no reply. The heavy door creaked again and Loke was alone.

"Are you ready to do what I asked of you?" asked the Frost giant,

opening the great door the fifth morning.

"Yes," answered Loke, meekly.

"You are willing to bring the apples of life?"

"Yes."

"And you will bring all three of them?"

"Yes."

"And you will bring them at once?"

"Yes."

"Go, then. I will go with you. Outside the walls of the shining city I will wait for you to bring the apples to me."

Then putting on the guise of birds, the two set forth, reaching the gateway of the city just as the Sungod was pouring down his flood of red and golden light upon the shining spires. The whole city lay bathed in the sunset splendor.

"Idun," said Loke, going directly to her, "it is well you guard so closely these golden apples of life. Without them we should grow old and die, even as wretched mortals grow old and die."

"Indeed, it would fare ill with us if harm came to these precious apples," answered Idun. "See the rich bloom upon them. If that were lost, then would our bloom be lost as well, and we should grow old and wrinkled."

"Yes," answered Loke; "and still--it seems very strange--but outside the gate of our city, just on the outer walls, are growing apples, looking so like these I cannot tell them one from the other. Bring your apples with you and let us see if they are alike. If they should prove to be, then I will gather them for you, and we will put them all together in the golden casket."

"How strange!" thought Idun innocently.

The Frost giant, in his great bird guise, wheeled round and round, impatiently awaiting the coming of Idun and the apples. Hardly had the gates closed upon her, when down he swooped, seized her in his great strong beak, and flew with her across the sea to his home among the mountains.

The days rolled on and on. The Sungod rose, and drove his chariot across the sky, and sank behind the distant purple hills a thousand times.

There was a gloom, a shadow over Asgard; for the gods were growing old. The life had gone out of their eyes; their smooth round faces had grown thin and peaked; their step was halting, and the feebleness of age was falling upon them.

"It is Loke who has done this," thundered Thor one day, when, from old age and weakness, he had been defeated in a battle with the now ever youthful giants. "It is Loke who has done this, and we will bear it no longer. Look at Odin; even he grows weak and bent and trembling. He is like the old men in Midgard. He, Odin, the All-father."

Thor's indignation waxed stronger and stronger. He set forth in search of Loke. "I will not even wait for him to come," he thundered, seizing his hammer and setting forth. "I shall find him, the evil-hearted, somewhere making mischief among the innocent people of Midgard," said he.

## THE APPLES OF LIFE.

### Part II.

"Henceforth, O evil-hearted, cruel Loke," burst forth the angry Thor, "henceforth Thor guards the walls of Asgard. Midgard, the skies, he shall forsake; no more will he brew storms; never shall the thunder roll nor the lightnings flash; for Thor will watch forever upon the battlements of Asgard the approach of the evil god who has brought such grief upon us. Never shall he enter the gates of the city again. Let him dare approach even to the golden gates, and Thor will smite him

with his mighty hammer."

Loke quailed before the fury of the great god Thor. To be an outcast from Asgard, even he could not bear. "Spare me, spare me!" whined the cowardly Loke. "Spare me once more, and I will go again to Jotunheim. I will bring back Idun and the three apples of life."

Thor stood looking at the cowardly Loke. He longed to strike him with the hammer; to kill him with his thunder bolt; to scorch him with his lightning arrows. But, evil as he was, Loke was immortal; he was the son of Odin.

"Go, then, you mischief-making, evil-hearted son of unhappy Odin! Go; and whether success is yours or not, remember Thor guards the walls of Asgard and watches with his thunders for your return. Never, never, as long as Thor wields the mighty hammer, and holds the powers of thunder and lightning, shall Loke enter the golden city without the golden apples of immortal life."

Without another word, Loke put on his guise of a great white bird and sped across the sea and sky, again to the land of Jotunheim.

Straight down he swooped upon the castle of the giant who, all this time, had kept Idun imprisoned in a strong walled tower of solid rock.

The giant was out upon the sea. "And it is well for me," thought Loke, "that he is. No power in Midgard or in Asgard could wrest these precious apples from the giant's grasp."

One quick look out over the mountains and down upon the sea, and Loke seized Idun in his talons, changed her at once into a nut, the apples safe within the shell, and swept away towards Asgard.

But alas for Loke! The giant had heard the whirr of the great white wings. Leaping to his feet in his boat, he scanned the sky with his sharp giant eye. "It is Loke! It is Loke!" bellowed he, catching sight of the great white bird among the clouds. "It is Loke! It is Loke! No bird of Midgard flies so high nor sweeps the air with such mighty wings."

With one great giant pull, he shot his boat upon the shore; with one



great giant bound he struck the mountain top.

"The apples of life! the apples of life!" he thundered. "Gone! gone! The apples of life are gone!"

One second, and putting on the guise of a great grey eagle he shot up into the sky in swift pursuit of Loke. The Sungod hid his chariot behind a cloud that the shadows might protect and cover Loke. Thor sent forth his thunder. The skies blackened; the wind beat back the great grey eagle; the lightnings staggered and blinded him. Still on and on he flew, gaining in spite of all upon the track of Loke.

Every eye in Asgard was strained; every giant in Jotunheim stood breathless upon his mountain. The great round faces of the giants grew tense; the wrinkled aged faces of the gods grew pale. It was a terrible race. It was a race for life and health and everlasting youth.

"Build fires upon the walls! Heap up the brush! Stand ready with the tapers!" cried Odin, who foresaw the end.

The brush is heaped. Each god stands ready, his haggard face growing whiter and thinner with fright and dread and eagerness.

Already the rush of Loke's wings are heard. The eagle follows close. Nearer and nearer they come, closer and closer is the race. One moment more!--One second!--The frightened eyes of Loke can be seen, so near he is. Thor sends his blinding fire once more across the eagle's track. It reels, for an instant it falls back. In that one second, with one last mighty stroke, Loke clears the walls and falls, exhausted, breathless, almost dead upon the golden pavement of the city.

"The fires! the fires! the fires!" cried Odin. An instant, and there rises from the walls great sheets of blaze. The brush crackles and snaps and sends up great tongues of fire. The eagle, angry, desperate, and blinded by the lightning sweeps on, straight towards them. Like a foolish moth, he bears down upon the city, into the very heart of the blaze. A sudden crackling, a cry of pain, a cloud of black, black smoke, and the great grey eagle falls a helpless mass upon the pavement beside the breathless Loke.

The haggard faces flush with hope and joy. The apples are safe. Idun

has come back, the apples again are theirs, and life and joy and eternal youth once more are with them.

Now the goddess of music bursts forth again in song; the god of poetry pours forth his melody; a feast is spread, and the gods and goddesses once more eat of the wonderful apples of life. The color comes back into their faded cheeks; light again flashes from their eyes. Youth and health and strength are theirs again. Peace reigns once more in Asgard.

from: The Project Gutenberg EBook of **Legends of Norseland**, by Anonymous



## HOW THE FLAMINGOES GOT THEIR STOCKINGS

Once the snakes decided that they would give a costume ball; and to make the affair a truly brilliant one they sent invitations to the frogs, the toads, the alligators and the fish.

The fish replied that since they had no legs they would not be able to do much dancing; whereupon, as a special courtesy to them, the ball was held on the shore of the Parana. The fish swam up to the very beach and sat looking on with their heads out of water. When anything pleased them they splashed with their tails.

To make as good an appearance as possible, the alligators put necklaces of bananas around their throats; and they came to the ball smoking big Paraguay cigars. The toads stuck fish scales all over their bodies; and when they walked, they moved their forelegs out and in as though they were swimming. They strutted up and down the beach with very glum, determined faces; and the fish kept calling to them, making fun of their scales. The frogs were satisfied to leave their smooth green skins just as they were; but they bathed themselves in perfume and walked on their

hind legs. Besides, each one carried a lightning bug, which waved to and fro like a lantern, at the end of a string in the frog's hand.

But the best costumes of all were worn by the snakes. All of them, without exception, had dancing gowns of the color of their skins. There were red snakes, and brown snakes, and pink snakes, and yellow snakes--each with a garment of tulle to match. The \_yarara\_, who is a kind of rattler, came in a single-piece robe of gray tulle with brick-colored stripes--for that is the way the \_yarara\_ dresses even when he is not going to a ball. The coral snakes were prettier still. They draped themselves in a gauze of reds, whites and blacks; and when they danced, they wound themselves round and round like corkscrews, rising on the tips of their tails, coiling and uncoiling, balancing this way and that. They were the most graceful and beautiful of all the snakes, and the guests applauded them wildly.

The flamingoes were the only ones who seemed not to be having a good time. Stupid birds that they were, they had not thought of any costumes at all. They came with the plain white legs they had at that time and the thick, twisted bills they have even now. Naturally they were envious of all the gowns they saw, but most of all, of the fancy dress of the coral snakes. Every time one of these went by them, courtesying, pirouetting, balancing, the flamingoes writhed with jealousy. For no one, meanwhile, was asking them to dance.

"I know what we must do," said one of the flamingoes at last. "We must go and get some stockings for our legs--pink, black and white like the coral snakes themselves--then they will all fall in love with us!"

The whole flock of them took wing immediately and flew across the river to a village nearby. They went to the store and knocked:

"Tan! Tan! Tan!"

"Who is it?" called the storekeeper.

"We're the flamingoes. We have come to get some stockings--pink, black, and white."

"Are you crazy?" the storekeeper answered. "I keep stockings for people, not for silly birds. Besides, stockings of such colors! You won't find

any in town, either!"

The flamingoes went on to another store:

"Tan! Tan! Tan! We are looking for stockings--pink, black and white. Have you any?"

"Pink, black and white stockings! Don't you know decent people don't wear such things? You must be crazy! Who are you, anyway?"

"We are the flamingoes," the flamingoes replied.

"In that case you are silly flamingoes! Better go somewhere else!"

They went to still a third store:

"Tan! Tan! Pink, black and white stockings! Got any?"

"Pink, black and white nonsense!" called the storekeeper. "Only birds with big noses like yours could ask for such a thing. Don't make tracks on my floor!"

And the man swept them into the street with a broom.

So the flamingoes went from store to store, and everywhere people called them silly, stupid birds.

However, an owl, a mischievous \_tatu\_, who had just been down to the river to get some water, and had heard all about the ball and the flamingoes, met them on his way back and thought he would have some fun with them.

"Good evening, good evening, flamingoes," he said, making a deep bow, though, of course, it was just to ridicule the foolish birds. "I know what you are looking for. I doubt if you can get any such stockings in town. You might find them in Buenos Aires; but you would have to order them by mail. My sister-in-law, the barn owl, has stockings like that, however. Why don't you go around and see her? She can give you her own and borrow others from her family."

"Thanks! Thanks, ever so much!" said the flamingoes; and they flew off

to the cellar of a barn where the barn owl lived.

"Tan! Tan! Good evening, Mrs. Owl," they said. "A relation of yours, Mr. Tatu, advised us to call on you. Tonight, as you know, the snakes are giving a costume ball, and we have no costumes. If you could lend us your pink, black and white stockings, the coral snakes would be sure to fall in love with us!"

"Pleased to accommodate you," said the barn owl. "Will you wait just a moment?"

She flew away and was gone some time. When she came back she had the stockings with her. But they were not real stockings. They were nothing but skins from coral snakes which the owl had caught and eaten during the previous days.

"Perhaps these will do," she remarked. "But if you wear them at the ball, I advise you to do strictly as I say: dance all night long, and don't stop a moment. For if you do, you will get into trouble, I assure you!"

The flamingoes listened to what she said; but, stupidly, did not try to guess what she could have meant by such counsel. They saw no danger in the pretty stockings. Delightedly they doubled up their claws like fists, stuck them through the snakeskins, which were like so many long rubber tubes, and flew back as quickly as they could to the ball.

When the guests at the dance saw the flamingoes in such handsome stockings, they were as jealous as could be. You see, the coral snakes were the lions of the evening, and after the flamingoes came back, they would dance with no one but the flamingoes. Remembering the instructions of the barn owl, the flamingoes kept their feet going all the time, and the snakes could not see very clearly just what those wonderful stockings were.

After a time, however, they grew suspicious. When a flamingo came dancing by, the snakes would get down off the ends of their tails to examine its feet more closely. The coral snakes, more than anybody else, began to get uneasy. They could not take their eyes off those stockings, and they got as near as they could, trying to touch the legs of the flamingoes with the tips of their tongues--for snakes use their tongues

to feel with, much as people use their hands. But the flamingoes kept dancing and dancing all the while, though by this time they were getting so tired they were about ready to give up.

The coral snakes understood that sooner or later the flamingoes would have to stop. So they borrowed the lightning bugs from the frogs, to be ready when the flamingoes fell from sheer exhaustion.

And in fact, it was not long before one of the birds, all tired out, tripped over the cigar in an alligator's mouth, and fell down on her side. The coral snakes all ran toward her with their lanterns, and held the lightning bugs up so close that they could see the feet of the flamingo as clearly as could be.

"Aha! Aha! Stockings, eh? Stockings, eh?" The coral snakes began to hiss so loudly that people could hear them on the other side of the Parana.

The cry was taken up by all the snakes: "They are not wearing stockings! We know what they have done! The flamingoes have been killing brothers of ours, and they are wearing their skins as stockings! Those pretty legs each stand for the murder of a coral snake!"

At this uproar, the flamingoes took fright and tried to fly away. But they were so tired from all the dancing that not one of them could move a wing. The coral snakes darted upon them, and began to bite at their legs, tearing off the false stockings bit by bit, and, in their rage, sinking their fangs deep into the feet and legs of the flamingoes.

The flamingoes, terrified and mad with pain, hopped this way and that, trying to shake their enemies off. But the snakes did not let go till every last shred of stocking had been torn away. Then they crawled off, to rearrange their gauze costumes that had been much rumped in the fray. They did not try to kill the flamingoes then and there; for most coral snakes are poisonous; and they were sure the birds they had bitten would die sooner or later anyway.

But the flamingoes did not die. They hopped down to the river and waded out into the water to relieve their pain. Their feet and legs, which had been white before, had now turned red from the poison in the bites. They stood there for days and days, trying to cool the burning ache, and hoping to wash out the red.

[Illustration: "The flamingoes ... hopped down to the river, and waded out ... to relieve their pain."]

But they did not succeed. And they have not succeeded yet. The flamingoes still pass most of their time standing on their red legs out in the water. Occasionally they go ashore and walk up and down for a few moments to see if they are getting well. But the pain comes again at once, and they hurry back into the water. Even there they sometimes feel an ache in one of their feet; and they lift it out to warm it in their feathers. They stand that way on one leg for hours, I suppose because the other one is so stiff and lame.

That is why the flamingoes have red legs instead of white. And the fishes know it too. They keep coming up to the top of the water and crying "Red legs! Red legs! Red legs!" to make fun of the flamingoes for having tried to borrow costumes for a ball. On that account, the flamingoes are always at war with the fishes. As they wade up and down, and a fish comes up too close in order to shout "Red legs" at them, they dip their long bills down and catch it if they can.

from: Project Gutenberg's **South American Jungle Tales**, by Horacio Quiroga



## **HOW THE MONKEY GOT A DRINK WHEN HE WAS THIRSTY**

Once upon a time the monkey made the tiger very angry. This is how it happened. The monkey was seated high up among the leafy branches of a mango tree playing upon his guitar. The tiger passed that way and lay down under the tree to rest. Just to tease him the monkey played and sang this little song:

"\_Tango ti tar, tango ti tar,

The tiger's bones are in my guitar.  
Tee hee, Tee hee.\_"

The tiger was very angry. "Just wait until I catch you, Mr. Monkey," he said. "Then I'll show you a trick or two with bones."

The monkey leaped from one tree to another keeping himself so well hid by the foliage that the tiger could not see him. Then he came down out of the trees and hid himself in a hole in the ground. When the tiger came near he again played and sang his little song:

"\_Tango ti tar, tango ti tar,  
The tiger's bones are in my guitar.  
Tee hee, Tee hee.\_"

The tiger put his paw into the hole and caught the monkey's leg. "Oh, ho, Mr. Tiger!" said the monkey. "You think that you have caught my leg but what you really have is just a little stick. Oh, ho! Oh, ho!" Then the tiger let go of the monkey's leg.

The monkey crawled farther back into the hole in the ground where the tiger's paw could not reach him. Then he said: "Thank you so much, Mr. Tiger, for letting go of my leg. It really was my leg, you know." Again he played and sang his little song:

"\_Tango ti tar, tango ti tar,  
The tiger's bones are in my guitar.  
Tee hee, Tee hee.\_"

The tiger was angrier than ever. He waited and waited for the monkey to come out of the hole in the ground but the monkey did not come. He had discovered another way out and once more from the high tree tops he sang down to the waiting tiger:

"\_Tango ti tar, tango ti tar,  
The tiger's bones are in my guitar.  
Tee hee, Tee hee.\_"

There had been a great drought in the land and there was only one watering place where the beasts could drink. The tiger knew that the monkey would have to go there when he was thirsty so he decided to



wait for him and catch him when he came to drink.

When the monkey went to the watering place to get a drink he found the tiger there waiting for him. He ran away as fast as the wind for he was really very much afraid of the tiger.

He waited and waited until he thought he should die of thirst, but the tiger did not go away from the watering place for a single minute. At last the monkey thought of a trick by which he would be able to get a drink.

He lay down by the side of the pathway as if he were dead. After a while an old woman came along the path carrying a dish of honey in a basket upon her head. She saw the monkey lying there by the path and, thinking that he was dead, she picked him up and put him into the basket with the dish of honey. When the monkey saw that it was honey in the dish he was very happy. He opened the dish and covered himself all over with the soft sticky honey. Then as the old woman walked under the trees he lightly sprang out of the basket into the trees. The old woman did not miss him until she got home and found only part of her dish of honey in the basket. "Why, I thought I had brought home a dead monkey in my basket," she said to her children. "Now there is no monkey here and my dish is only half full of honey. The monkey must have been playing one of his tricks."

The monkey had, in the meantime, stuck leaves from the trees into the honey all over his body so that he was completely disguised. His own mother would never have recognised him. He looked something like a porcupine; but instead of sharp quills there were green leaves sticking out all over him. In this fashion he went to the drinking place and the tiger did not recognise him. He took a long, deep drink. He was so thirsty and the water tasted so good that he stayed in the drinking place too long. The leaves came out of the honey which had held them and the tiger saw that it was really the monkey. The monkey was barely able to escape.

He was so badly frightened that he waited and waited a long, long time before he again went to the drinking place. At last he got so thirsty that he couldn't wait any longer. He went to the resin tree and covered himself with resin. Then he stuck leaves into the resin and again went to the drinking place.

The tiger saw him, but as the tiger expected to see the leaves come off just as soon as the monkey got into the water, he thought he would wait and catch him in his bare skin. This time the leaves did not come off, for the resin held them fast and was not in the least affected by the water. The tiger thought that it was not the monkey and that he must have made a mistake. The monkey drank all he wished and then strolled away leisurely without the tiger's attacking him. He used the resin and leaves every time he wanted a drink after that. He kept up the trick until the rainy season arrived and he could find plenty of water in other places than the big drinking place.

from: The Project Gutenberg eBook, **Fairy Tales from Brazil**, by Elsie Spicer Eells



## WAYARNBEH THE TURTLE

Oolah, the lizard, was out getting yams on a Mirrieh flat. She had three of her children with her. Suddenly she thought she heard some one moving behind the big Mirrieh bushes. She listened. All of a sudden out jumped Wayarnbeh from behind a bush and seized Oolah, telling her not to make a noise and he would not hurt her, but that he meant to take her off to his camp to be his wife. He would take her three children too and look after them. Resistance was useless, for Oolah had only her yam stick, while Wayarnbeh had his spears and boondees. Wayarnbeh took the woman and her children to his camp. His tribe when they saw him bring home a woman of the Oolah tribe, asked him if her tribe had given her to him. He said, "No, I have stolen her."

"Well," they said, "her tribe will soon be after her; you must protect yourself; we shall not fight for you. You had no right to steal her without telling us. We had a young woman of our own tribe for you, yet you go and steal an Oolah and bring her to the camp of the Wayarnbeh. On

your own head be the consequences."

In a short time the Oolahs were seen coming across the plain which faced the camp of the Wayambah. And they came not in friendship or to parley, for no women were with them, and they carried no boughs of peace in their hands, but were painted as for war, and were armed with fighting weapons.

When the Wayambah saw the approach of the Oolah, their chief said: "Now, Wayambah, you had better go out on to the plain and do your own fighting; we shall not help you."

Wayambah chose the two biggest boreens that he had; one he slung on him, covering the front of his body, and one the back; then, seizing his weapons, he strode out to meet his enemies.

When he was well out on to the plain, though still some distance from the Oolah, he called out, "Come on."

The answer was a shower of spears and boomerangs. As they came whizzing through the air Wayambah drew his arms inside the boreens, and ducked his head down between them, so escaped.

As the weapons fell harmless to the ground, glancing off his boreen, out again he stretched his arms and held up again his head, shouting, "Come on, try again, I'm ready."

The answer was another shower of weapons, which he met in the same way. At last the Oolahs closed in round him, forcing him to retreat towards the creek.

Shower after shower of weapons they slung at him, and were getting at such close quarters that his only chance was to dive into the creek. He turned towards the creek, tore the front boreen off him, flung down his weapons and plunged in.

The Oolah waited, spears poised in hand, ready to aim directly his head appeared above water, but they waited in vain. Wayambah, the black fellow, they never saw again, but in the waterhole wherein he had dived they saw a strange creature, which bore on its back a fixed structure like a boreen, and which, when they went to try and catch it, drew in

its head and limbs, so they said, "It is Wayambah." And this was the beginning of Wayambah, or turtle, in the creeks.

from: Project Gutenberg's **Australian Legendary Tales**, by K. Langloh Parker



## **THE TORTOISE AND MONKEY.**

A tortoise and a monkey were great friends, and as they were on the road one day, a man passed laden with plantains. And the monkey, seeing him, said "You go and wait on the road, and when the man pursues you, run away. And so the man put down his load (the monkey having hid in the jungle), and ran after the tortoise. Then the monkey came out of the jungle and took the plantains and molasses that the man bare, and climbed with them into a tree. Then the man, not being able to catch the tortoise, returned, and, not getting his things, went home. Then the tortoise returned and asked his friend for his share of the plantains and molasses. And the monkey offered him for molasses potsherds, and for plantains their skins only; and, when the tortoise insisted, the monkey got angry and hoisted his friend into the tree, saying "See for yourself, if any plantains or molasses be left." And so he went away and left him. And he could not get down, and one by one various animals came under the tree, but could not help him. And last of these came a very aged rhinoceros, and the tortoise begged leave to jump down on his back. And to this the rhinoceros consented, and so the tortoise leapt down, with such force that he broke the old rhinoceros' back. Then he covered up the corpse with leaves, and going to the king's court, sat him down under the king's throne; and, when the royal council was assembled, the tortoise sneezed loudly, "Who dared to sneeze?" said the king. "Cut off his nose!" But they all with one accord declared that they had not sneezed, and, after he had sneezed once or twice again, some one saw the tortoise under the king's

throne. So he said respectfully "If your Majesty wishes, you can kill me, but I have something to say: 'There is some living thing under your Majesty's throne. Without doubt, it was that which sneezed.'" On which the king, looking under his throne, saw the tortoise, and ordered them to cut off his nose. But the tortoise said "Do not cut off my nose, and in return I will give your Majesty a rhinoceros." And at first the king was angry, but for his entreating gave him men with him to fetch his rhinoceros, and when the men returned with the body of the rhinoceros, the king was very pleased, and gave the tortoise a horse.

And as he was riding off, he met the monkey and told him that the king had given him the horse. And when the monkey asked him why, he said that he had jumped on to a common lizard from the tree, on which the monkey had left him and had killed it. And that then he had covered it up with leaves and told the king it was a rhinoceros. And the king was pleased and gave him a horse. So the monkey killed a lizard, and went and told the king it was a rhinoceros, and got his nose cut off for his pains. And that's all!

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of **A Collection of Kachári Folk-Tales and Rhymes**, by J. D. Anderson